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THE OLD LIBERTY POLE.

BY CALEB DUNN.

The Liberty Pole from the village square
Points its bannered top to the sky;
For nearly a century it has stood there,
And watched the years go by.

Many a gathering of friendly ones
Has assembled around its base,
And many a volley of patriot guns
Has echoed about the place.

Many a procession has passed it by,
On the Nation's natal day,
And cheered that banner in the sky,
In a heart-like, jubilant way.

Tales of the old-time days could be told
By this sentinel standing there—
Legends of love and legends of gold,
Of hope and of despair.

But about its brow the wind may sing,
And the snow may fall, and the rain.
Yet this veteran, like a voiceless thing,
Is mute through pleasure or pain.

It has seen the young grow old and white,
And watched Life's expiring flame,
But still, with its brow in the bright sunlight,
The Liberty Pole stands the same.

THE GRANADAN DUEL;

OR, THE

Castilian and the Moor.

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SERAGLIO.

At the dwelling of the Alcaide there was consternation and dismay. The morning had come, and no intelligence from Manfred. Thus far a knowledge of the calamity had been kept from Morgiana and Ida; but they could be kept in ignorance no longer. When the Countess knew that her son was missing she was beside herself with terror and alarm, and she might have been prostrated for a time by the paroxysm had she not been called to administer consolation to the wildly weeping Princess of St. Ildefonso. Ida was for a brief space almost paralyzed, for she believed full sure that her dear lover had been murdered by the inhuman Moors against whom he had twice drawn his knightly sword.

Guy could only chafe and fret in his utter inability to render assistance, and he called loudly upon Ben Ahmed to demand the royal interference.

In the midst of the Babel of grief old Hafed appeared upon the scene. He drew Morgiana aside and spoke with her privately. He did not reflect upon her disregard of his previous warnings, nor did he even let fall a hint that the danger which had overtaken her son was suspended over herself. He told her that he had found the place of Manfred's durance, and that he had set a trusty man upon the watch.

"For yourself, dear lady," he said, "I urge that you will remain quiet. Leave this matter entirely in my hands; or, at least, for the love of Heaven, and for the love you bear your son, do not make yourself conspicuous."

In that place, and at that time, Morgiana could not ask the questions which her anxiety dictated, and she signified to her friend and servitor that she would try to be content.

To the others Hafed told of Manfred's situation as he understood it. He had just turned to confer with them when Ben Ahmed was called away by a messenger from the King.

"I am going to the King," said the Alcaide, as he was about to turn away, "and be sure I will plead for our friend. Since I know where Manfred is, I can appeal to Jusef with good grace; and," he added, to Morgiana, "if you knew him as I do, you would take courage. However much he may shrink from harsh measures with Haroun, be sure that his native goodness of heart, and his deep sense of justice, will not suffer him to withhold his saving hand from the brave knight who has served him so well. I need hardly confess to you," he continued, after a pause, turning to Sir Guy and the esquires, "that the man Abdalla and the King of Granada are one and the same person."

"How? ABDALLA!—*King of Granada?*" cried Hafed, with a convulsive start.

"Aye," answered the Alcaide. "Our monarch is fond of assuming that name when away from his palace, with the royal robes cast aside. Hast thou ever met him in that guise?"

Hafed stood like one upon whom a thunderbolt had fallen; and he was only recalled to a sense of surrounding things by Morgiana, who, pale and trembling, like one frightened by a terrible phantom, had tottered forward and sank upon his arm.

"Hafed! Hafed!" she whispered. "What is this?"

"Hush!" he enjoined. "It can be nothing. It is but a wild phantasy. Come with me."

And thus speaking, the old man led her from the room, leaving those behind in deep amazement.

"By my life!" cried Guy, after they had gone, "the mystery deepens!"

"Mystery on every hand," added Michael.

"And may kind Heaven vouchsafe a merciful solution!" ejaculated the Knight of St. Mark.

He would have spoken further, but Ida, weak and faint from her great agony, demanded his attention, and he took her upon his arm and led her from the room.

Ben Ahmed, meanwhile, was on his way to the Alhambra. He found the King with only the deaf mutes in attendance, and was at once admitted to audience; and the monarch, with calm, stern aspect, proceeded without circumlocution to the business in hand.

"Ben Ahmed," he said, his look and tone giving token to one who was used to his moods that he had a great weight upon his mind, "I trust it will not surprise thee if I announce that I have resolved to take thy daughter for my wife."

If the Alcaide gave sign of surprise, it was surely a surprise of joy.

"And," pursued the King, "I would have the work speedily done."

"Sire," returned Ben Ahmed, "thou hast but to speak the word. Miriam is already thine."

"So far as thou canst assign her," said the King, with a meaning look. "But how is it with the lady herself? Will her heart be mine?"

"I trust so, sire."

"Thinkest thou it is impossible that she may love another?"

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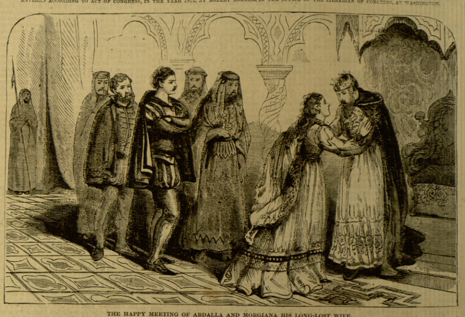

THE HAPPY MEETING OF ABDALLA AND MORGIANA HIS LONG-LOST WIFE.

"If thou alludest to the Prince Haroun, I can give thee solemn assurance that she both loathes and fears him."

"I do not allude to the Prince. I allude to the Christian knight, Guy of St. Mark."

Ben Ahmed started and caught his breath.

"The Knight of Castile is beneath thy roof?" said Jusef.

"Yes, sire."

"And hath rendered great service to Miriam?"

"Yes, sire,—but—as Heaven is my ultimate hope—"

"Enough, Ben Ahmed," interrupted the King, with a wave of the hand. "I believe that thou art ignorant of the matter; and it may be that my suspicions are ill-founded; but it were well to guard against the possibility. I have duly considered, and I will on this very day make the Princess Miriam my wife. I would have no parade—no useless ceremony. My heart is not in the mood. Thou knowest the ground. The line of the great Alhamar must not be suffered to run out with me; and the wicked son of my wicked brother must not be permitted to perpetuate it in the event of my failure. It would be a calamity to Granada. Miriam is of our line. Her mother was my father's sister. Thou knowest it all."

"I know," said Ben Ahmed.

"And what thinkest thou of my plan?"

"It accords with my own wishes, sire."

"Then bring thy daughter hither at noon. I will send a fitting escort. She hath long known my thought in this matter, and cannot be entirely unprepared."

"It shall be done, sire, as thou hast directed. And now may I bring to thy royal notice another matter of pressing importance?"

The King nodded assent, and the Alcaide proceeded to relate the circumstances of Sir Manfred's disappearance, together with the report of old Hafed. It was known that the youth had been seized by Prince Haroun, and was now a prisoner in the Prince's house.

Jusef was deeply troubled by this.

"I do not think," he said, "that Haroun meditates personal harm to the youthful knight. If I thought he did, I would send a force to the rescue on the instant, for I have conceived a strong love for the brave Christian; but I am confident that the only object of the Prince is to cause the ejectment of both these Castilian knights from the city. Nevertheless, Haroun hath transcended his authority in this outrage, and I will see that Manfred is set free. I will send a messenger at once, and command that the knight be not harmed. So rest thee easy on that score, Ben Ahmed. And now hasten to prepare thy daughter for the nuptials. She shall share my throne, and be queen of Granada. Give her to understand this."

With this great honor suspended over his head it is not a wonder that the Alcaide forgot to press further the claims of Manfred; nor is it a wonder that Jusef, in view of the momentous step upon which he had resolved, and which was so near at hand, should have neglected haste in the same matter. He did not believe that Haroun meditated personal injury to the Christian. Within the bounds of his comprehension there was to be found no possible cause for such proceeding. He was fully impressed with the faith that Haroun only sought to banish the obnoxious Christians from the realm; and he would consider that business in due time. The banishment could not well be consummated without his royal sign.

Ben Ahmed hastened away to his palace, and upon reaching the inner court of his abode, he ordered servants to prepare a palanquin. He next proceeded to the apartments of his daughter, whom he found engaged with her maid.

"Miriam," he said, "thou art to bear me company to the royal dwelling of the Alhambra. Array thyself in befitting attire."

The Princess started as from the spring of some deadly thing, and turned pale like unto death.

"O, my father, why is this?"

"Thou should'st know the meaning, my child; for surely the prospect hath been open to thee long enough."

"Is it—to marry with the King?"

"Aye. Thou art to become, this day, Sultana—our monarch's first and only wife."

Miriam shrank back with a dull cry of pain, and clasped her hands over her bosom. Her father had not expected that she would exhibit joy in prospect of the nuptials, but he had not looked for this result. A little reflection, however, led him to the cause of this opposition. She had never before manifested such emotion in view of a possible union with Jusef; and he was convinced that deep love for another could alone cause her thus to faint and tremble. Who the loved one was he had no difficulty in determining, though he wondered how the King had guessed the truth.

Ben Ahmed's first impulse was one of disappointment and wrath; and had he given way to the feeling he would have spoken harsh words to his child, and he would also have cursed the Christian knight. But he restrained himself, and after a time his more sober impulses prevailed. He loved his beautiful daughter, and since she was to become the wife of the King, he would make the way as easy as possible.

"Miriam," he said, advancing and taking her hand, "thou knowest this thing is fixed beyond the power of earth to unsay it. Reflect, my child, upon the glory and honor thus set apart for thee—and for thee alone of all the women of Granada. The people have marvelled much that Jusef hath never yet taken a wife. It is a source of great question. Why should he, in the prime of life, who might have a score of wives from the fairest and purest of our maidens, live the life of a solemn recluse? And more, still,—the people are offended. They love Jusef, and regret to behold his line thus likely to fail. But a happier day hath dawned for Granada."

"Alas!" murmured Miriam, "a day for me most miserable!"

"Child!" cried the Alcaide, sternly, "dost reflect upon the ruin which must follow should the King discover thy faithlessness? Let me speak to thee this once a word which must never pass my lips again. I had resolved that I would never breathe it to thee, but the demand is imperative. I want from thee no answer—no response. I ask thee only to hear and consider:

"It is known more widely than thou thinkest that thy love is fixed upon the Christian Knight of St. Mark. Wert thou to turn from the King to this stranger death and confiscation would befall me and mine. Should the people of Granada know that through thy treachery to the realm their King went wifeless and heirless, they would curse thee and me to their dying breath. Reflect, my child, and be wise. I chide thee not for the past; but if through fault of thine ruin cometh in the future—"

With a low moan Miriam put forth her hand and stopped her father's speech.

"I know all thou would'st say. Since the light of hope and joy must be cut off forever, let me submit as best I can. I bear no evil thought, my father, and I will do what is right, though my heart break in the doing."

Ben Ahmed drew his child to his bosom, and kissed her upon the brow, and then bade her prepare at once.

The Princess was as sensible as she was beautiful; and she knew well that the fate could not be avoided. If the monarch had spoken his will, opposition on her part would be worse than useless—it might be, as her father had suggested, fatal. She bowed to the mandate which she could not set aside, and with her maid she repaired to her tiring-room, there to prepare for the sacrifice. She submitted like one in a dream, pale and passionless, the sharp agony at her heart held resolutely from outward expression. The faithful attendant marvelled not, for she fancied that the weight of the impending grandeur of rank and position had thus curbed the spirit of her mistress.

In due time Miriam was prepared, and with an escort of honor she was conducted to the court, and seated in the palanquin, and thence borne to the royal palace. Four eunuchs came forth and took the palanquin from the hands of the Alcaide's servants, and bore it into the Court of the Myrtles, where it was set down beneath a portico supported by columns of alabaster. The King himself, contrary to all former custom, handed her to the pavement, and conducted her toward the main hall of the Seraglio, where a score of servants were in waiting to serve her.

Never had Jusef seen the maiden look more beautiful, and though he looked kindly, and even fondly upon her, yet in his eyes was no fire of passionate love, nor did his speech betray the throbbing of a heart deeply penetrated by the erotic dart. He observed that the maiden was pale and cheerless, but he made no remark thereupon. He spoke kindly, but more like a father than like a lover. He spoke as one who had authority, and in his brief allusion to the work of the hour he signified his will and pleasure in a manner that left no doubt, and admitted of no answer.

"Miriam," he said, at the door of the females' apartment, holding both her hands, and looking down into her face, "thou art to be my wife, and my Sultana. I shall have no other wife but thee. In return I ask thee to be true and faithful. We may learn to love in time. I will teach my heart if I can!"

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW BEN ABBAS FULFILLED HIS MISSION.

Despite the pains of his captivity Manfred felt a keen appetite, and the savory viands which had been placed before him enlisted his attention. He had seated himself at the table when the door of his apartment was again opened, and a man whom he quickly recognized as one of his captors entered. The newcomer carefully closed the door behind him, and then advanced to the table and drew the salver away from the prisoner.

"Sir Manfred," he said, "before thou eatest listen to me. I have, ere this, raised my hand against thee, as thou knowest; but I am now and henceforth thy friend. Dost call to mind an old man named Hafed?"

"Hafed!" cried Manfred, with a start. "What of him?"

"Hush!—Speak carefully.—Last night Hafed was here. He came for thy succor, but could not see thee. He saw me, however, and hired me to thy service. I accepted his gold, and swore that I would be true. And thus I, who am called Ben Abbas, am thy servant, and am pledged to save thee if I can. Wilt thou trust me?"

"And yet thou must, in this, prove false to another?" said Manfred hesitatingly.

"False to a villain, who would use me for villainous purposes, that I may be true to a worthy man whose service is humane and honorable," responded Ben Abbas, promptly and with a show of worthy pride.

The knight looked into his face, and saw that it was frank and clear.

"Ben Abbas, I trust thee."

"Then know, my master, that the Prince hath resolved upon thy death. From some cause unknown to me he fears thee."

"Is his source of fear connected with this talisman?" asked Manfred, drawing the gleaming jewel in sight.

"It is, I am sure; and he has resolved that thou shalt die. The man who accompanied the servant that bore this salver was Al Modi, the Prince's chief counsellor, and a villain of the deepest dye. His coming hath led me to know that mischief is in the wind, and I am convinced that the meditated death lurks in the food they have brought thee. This thing hath been done before, and I know the sign. These savory smelling viands, and this tempting drink, are all poisoned! Touch them not. Keep thy fast until I can be with thee again. According to promise, I will seek old Hafed, and make known to him thy situation. I think he hath a power not yet touched. I can do no more at this time, as a strong guard is set over this part of the palace. I can only leave thee this good sword, and bid thee hide it until the time shall come when it alone can serve thee."

Thus speaking the Moor drew a bright, keen sword from beneath his saya, and handed it to the knight, who took it with a glad emotion, feeling something like himself again with a trusty weapon in his grasp.

Ben Abbas dared tarry no longer. Not only was there danger of detection by the guards, but he had other business.

"Hasten," said Manfred, as his new ally turned away. "Seek our good Hafed, and let him know the evil that impends. I will not touch the food, and this excellent sword shall serve me if there cometh the need."

As Ben Abbas' watch for the night was done, and as another had come to take his place, he found no difficulty in leaving the palace unobserved; and when once clear of the walls he made all possible haste to the dwelling of the Alcaide, where he quickly gained audience with Hafed. The old man was thunder-struck when he heard the announcement of Manfred's deadly peril, and having reflected for a brief spell, he seemed resolved upon his course of action.

"Thou knowest, O Allah!" he cried, raising his clasped hands toward heaven, "that in his heart thy servant meaneth that which is right. Guide him, and defend the just against the unjust!"

Then to the messenger he said,—

"Return, O, Ben Abbas, and be near to our young master. I will bring succor if I can. If I fail, I will come and die by his side."

Promising to do his best Ben Abbas went his way; and with hurried preparations Hafed set forth for the Alhambra. Arriving at the Court of Justice he asked for the Grand Chamberlain, Tarik. He was informed that Tarik was engaged with the King upon business of the utmost importance.

"Go to him," urged Hafed, "and say to him that one awaits him here whom he knew in former years, and that the matter is of life and death."

It was an order of the King that a message of life or death, no matter how poor or humble the messenger, should always be quickly regarded, and without further remonstrance a page was dispatched to the Grand Chamberlain.

Hafed had not much longer to wait, for presently Tarik appeared. He was an old man—a man of about Hafed's own age—and of benevolent aspect.

"How now?" he demanded, approaching his visitor. "Who art thou that calleth my attention at this hour?"

"Dost not know me, Tarik?"

The Chamberlain approached nearer, and gazed more fixedly into the visitor's face. Suddenly he started, and his whole frame quivered as he put forth his hand.

"HAFED!" he whispered. "Is it thou?"

"It is Hafed."

"But I thought thee dead. It was so given out in Granada."

"Did'st not thou thyself command me, when I went away, that we should be thenceforth as those that are dead to Granada?"

"Aye, Hafed, I did bid thee thus regarding those whom thou did'st bear with thee; but from thyself I expected other report."

"Know then, O, Tarik, that I took the course which I deemed wisest. Since it was made to appear to me that mortal danger would rest upon my mistress if it were known that she lived, I caused word to reach thee that we had all perished, thinking that thereby thou would'st be greatly relieved."

"Aye, Hafed,—and thou did'st judge rightly. And now I find thee living."

"Not only me, but the others."

"THE OTHERS!" gasped Tarik, shaken to the very centre of his being. "Hafed, speak that word again!"

"It is as I have said, good Tarik. Circumstances beyond my power to control have brought us hither. Know that the infant which I bore in my arms when I left Granada hath grown to be a goodly man and a gallant knight. An affair of honor led him to seek this realm, as the laws of Castile would not allow the single combat there to transpire. Shortly after his departure his mother learned of the business which had taken him away, and, in her great alarm for the safety of her son, she resolved to follow him. I would have prevented her if I could, but she would not listen."

"Thou would'st have prevented her?"

"Aye. Did'st thou not swear to me that there would be ever mortal danger to her in Granada?"

"Yes, Hafed,—I remember. And I told thee that her husband was dead?"

"Surely thou did'st,—not only that he was dead, but that he had been a frightful enemy to the realm, and that a price had been set upon the heads of all his kin."

"Yes, yes," said Tarik, thoughtfully. "I remember that I told thee this; and I thought at the time I was doing for the best; and in much I told the truth. Had Morgiana and her child been known in Granada at that day they would have been given to the executioner upon the moment of discovery. But what of this present errand, Hafed?"

"It is a matter of life or death," answered Hafed, quickly; "and as thou did'st once transcend thy duty to save the mother and child, I have dared, in this great emergency, to seek thine aid. Thou rememberest the wondrous talisman of precious stones which Abdalla gave to Morgiana?"

"Yes," said Tarik, breathlessly.

"The mother hath given it to her son, and her son hath worn it upon his neck. By an accident which seems almost the work of an evil genius Prince Haroun hath discovered the talisman, and now hath Manfred in durance."

"MANFRED!" repeated the chamberlain.

"Aye,—and I have positive assurance that Haroun hath already taken measures for the youth's death."

Tarik was for the moment like one upon whom a thunderbolt had fallen; but by a strong effort he recovered himself, and quickly commanding his speech, he grasped Hafed by the arm.

"This same youth was with Guy of St. Mark in the forest?" he queried.

"Yes," answered Hafed.

"And was wounded in saving the life of—"

"Of the King, I have been credibly informed," added Hafed, as the other hesitated.

"Aye,—it was the King; and though he himself is slow to believe it, yet I know that the assassins were set on by the Prince."

"And I can swear to it!" rejoined Hafed; "for Manfred's esquire was set upon by Prince Haroun in person."

"And this Manfred is now in the Prince's power?"

"He is."

"Where?"

"In the Prince's own palace, not an arrow's shot away."

"Then for once," cried Tarik, in great excitement, "I will myself command the royal guards. Delay may be dangerous. I cannot now stop to explain to the King. I know the temper of our soldiers, and they will joy to march against the palace of Haroun.

"What ho!—Without there!"

An officer was quickly in attendance, and orders were given for the instant mustering of the royal guards. The Grand Chamberlain was known to be the King's favorite minister, and his authority none thought to question.

* * * * * *

For half an hour after the departure of Ben Abbas, Manfred remained undisturbed in his prison chamber, the untasted food growing cold in the silver plates. At the end of that time the door was opened, and a man looked in. The door was reclosed and bolted, and the man went away. By and by another came. This time it was he who had accompanied the servant that brought the food, and whom the youth now knew for Al Modi. He came in and looked at the untouched viands, and then looked upon the prisoner.

"How now, Sir Knight? Dost thou not eat?"

"Thou seest," answered Manfred.

Al Modi's quick ear caught the tone of this reply that it was crisp and defiant.

"Hast thine appetite deserted thee?" he asked, watching the youth's face narrowly.

"Entirely so," said Manfred.

"And yet thou did'st thank us for the food when we brought it."

"We may be thankful for attentions which we cannot profit by," said the knight, returning the Moor's look without wavering. "I am willing to take the will for what it is worth."

Al Modi regarded the prisoner a few moments in silence, and then turned away and left the apartment. Manfred knew that the man's suspicions were aroused, and he hastened to the door and placed his ear against a panel, and distinctly heard the announcement made that his food had not been touched; and he heard, moreover, enough to convince him, if further proof were wanted, that his neglect to eat and drink had thus far frustrated a set plan.

After this the minutes passed slowly and heavily away until the prisoner again heard the sound of approaching feet. He withdrew to the far corner of the room, and was careful to wear the sword which Ben Abbas had given him concealed beneath his outer clothing. Presently the door was opened, and Al Modi once more entered, followed by two attendants, all three of them being well armed. They approached the spot where the prisoner stood, and the leader thus addressed him:—

"Sir Manfred, it hath been decreed that thou must die. We would have made thy death like unto a painless sinking to sleep, but our plans have been frustrated. Wilt thou kneel and pray, or wilt thou stand as thou art?"

"I shall not kneel here," replied the youth, defiantly.

"Be it as thou wilt."

Thus speaking Al Modi drew his sword, and his attendants followed his example, the three advancing their points with the evident intent of thrusting him through where he stood; but instantly a change came o'er the spirit of their purpose. Like a flash appeared the bright blade of the knight, and thinking that two opponents would be less dangerous than three he smote the nearest man upon the neck, laying him low on the moment. The movement had been so quickly performed that their companion had fallen before the other two fairly realized that the prisoner was armed.

Al Modi drew back with an exclamation of surprise, and his man followed suit. The game was not as they had anticipated. They knew something of the prowess of the Knight of Alcala, and it became a serious question in the mind of Al Modi whether they two could successfully cope with the champion.

Meantime Manfred held conference with himself. Here had been an attempt upon his life by poison, which, having failed, was followed by this direct attempt at assassination. If he allowed these two men to depart, they would bring back with them a new force with which he might not cope. Thus was he meditating when a new sound broke the air—that of hurrying feet, and the hum of many voices.

"Hold!" he cried, as his two assailants backed toward the door. "Add not cowardice to the sum of thy villainies. Thou hast chosen the sword, and so let it be!"

He struck as he spoke, and Al Modi's sword-arm sank. Another movement, and his keen blade passed through the body of the attendant ruffian from side to side.

Al Modi staggered back and made for the door, shouting at the top of his voice for help. And help came. In a moment more Prince Haroun himself rushed into the apartment, followed by a gang of his villainous satellites, and when he saw what had been done—when he saw two of his men-at-arms prostrate, and his chief henchman sorely wounded—he gave the order for cutting down the prisoner without mercy.

At least half a score of swords were levelled against the knight, and though he defended himself bravely in his chosen corner, yet he must soon have fallen had not a new actor appeared upon the scene.

"Hold! Ye know not what ye do!" shouted a strange voice; and following it came Sir Guy of St. Mark crashing through the surging throng.

The Prince saw him, and also saw that he was followed closely by Ben Abbas.

"Ha!" cried Haroun, livid with rage, "thou art the traitor!" And he aimed a blow at the head of the recreant Moor.

But Ben Abbas was too quick for him. He had anticipated, and was prepared. Stooping to avoid the descending blow he struck the Prince to the heart with his dagger.

"I call Allah to witness," Ben Abbas cried, as he held the crimsoned steel aloft, "that I have struck the best blow I ever struck. Granada should bless me for this."

"Thou shalt be pardoned at all events," said a new-comer. And the crowd fell back, and every point was lowered, as Tarik, the Grand Chamberlain, appeared in their midst, a score of the royal guard following at his heels.

Manfred was saved, and the palace of the Prince was in the hands of officers whom Tarik commanded.

Manfred looked first upon Guy, and then upon old Hafed, who had come with the chamberlain, and he asked how it had all happened.

"I only know," said Guy, "that I was searching about this place for some sign of yourself, when the royal guard came up. Hafed gave me the cue, and I joined him."

Tarik advanced and gazed upon the youthful Knight of Alcala, and instinctively his head was bowed; but only for a moment.

"There is no time for explanations here," he cried, starting up. "There is other business that needs our attention; and, if I mistake not, we cannot make too much haste. Good Hafed, thou wilt bring the Lady Morgiana. Speed thee, and let no mishap delay thy movements.—Sir Manfred, fear not to trust thyself in my care for the present. Thy mother shalt join thee anon."

As Tarik passed the prostrate body of Prince Haroun, which some of the attendants had removed to the couch, he touched it with his hand, and when he found it utterly lifeless he gave thanks to Allah.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

As white as alabaster, and almost as lifeless, was the Princess Miriam as she leaned upon the arm of her chief female attendant on her way to the Hall of the Ambassadors, where the King had planned that the nuptial ceremony should be performed upon the dais of the throne. At the private entrance to the hall she was met by her father, who was deeply moved when he saw the strange pallor of his child.

"Miriam," he whispered, "why is this? Thy hand is cold. Tell me it is only a passing state."

She looked up and tried to speak, but the words died upon her lips. She could not tell him what was in her heart. Once she could have been thus led toward the royal throne, and, despite her lack of love for the King, she might have met her fate with resignation; but now only agony was in the ordeal. Her heart had been so wholly and devotedly given to the Christian knight, and every hope and aspiration of the future had become so firmly knit with the new and all-absorbing love, that the sudden rending of the tender cords touched very near to life itself.

And yet Miriam knew that she could not put aside the fate. She knew the laws of the realm. Her father's life was in her hands, and might depend upon her decision in this matter. For a single moment at the door she stopped, and withdrawing her hand from her father's grasp, she bowed her head and covered her face. She murmured a word of farewell to the dear love which she must bury in her bosom; and she breathed a prayer to the Most High for strength; and then she gave her hand to her father, and he led her forward.

But not far,—no, not far. The King had arisen to meet the advancing maiden, and was upon the point of stepping down from his throne, when a murmur of eager voices, and the tramp of many feet, broke the air from the Court of Lions, and very soon the Grand Chamberlain entered the royal presence, his face flushed, and his robe covered with dust.

"How now, Tarik?" demanded the monarch, in startled surprise.

"Sire," replied the Chamberlain, bowing low, "I have a wonderful revelation to make."

"Speak, good Tarik, and keep me not in suspense. Thy very face shows the weight of thy burden."

Tarik looked around, and when he had seen that only the intimate and trusted officers and friends of the royal household were present, he spoke:

"Sire, know first, that thy nephew, Prince Haroun, is dead. He fell, in the midst of his traitorous iniquity, by the hand of one of his own servants."

"By the hand of a slave!" cried Jusef. "And is the caitiff living?"

"The servant did no wrong, sire. He struck to save the life of one better than the son of thy brother. He struck to save that noble youth whose sword was raised between thee and death in the forest."

"Ha! I remember. Ben Ahmed told me of the youth's arrest. But dost mean that Haroun attempted his life?"

"He did, sire."

"And wherefore?"

"If I can read the sign aright, O King, Haroun would have cut down the Knight of Alcala for the same reason that he would have stricken thee."

"By Heavens! Tarik, there is mystery in thy words. How gained thee knowledge of Haroun's foul intent?"

"Through a messenger, sire, whom I will introduce if it pleaseth thee."

So little had there been of the monarch's heart in the ceremony which had been interrupted by the entrance of his Chamberlain that his mind seemed wholly diverted from it by this new business. The mention of the youthful Knight of Alcala—the youth whose face had so wondrously attracted him on a former occasion—had called up strange emotions, and he sought a solution of the mystery. If Tarik held the key, he would delay not the revelation.

"Bring in thy messenger," he commanded.

The Chamberlain retired, and presently returned leading Hafed by the hand.

"This is the man, sire, of whom I spoke."

The King gazed upon the new-comer, and directly he started, as with an electric shock, and trembled from head to foot.

Nor was Hafed himself less affected. When he beheld the man who wore the royal robes, and upon whose head rested the crown of Granada, a quick gasp of surprise burst from his lips, and he stood as one doubting the evidence of his own senses.

"Is it Hafed?" asked the King, in a sharp whisper.

"Abdalla!" uttered the old man, still gazing, spellbound, upon the monarch.

"Thou art Hafed?"

"Yes, sire."

"I was Abdalla in those other years." The monarch spoke thus far as in a dream. Then he started down from the dais and caught the old man by the arm.

"Hafed!—If thou art Hafed, the dead is arisen. They told me thou wert dead."

Hafed trembled from head to foot, and knew not what to say.

"Speak!" cried the King. "Why was thy death reported to me?"

Tarik touched Hafed upon the shoulder, and bade him speak; and thus bidden, the old servant collected his thoughts, and presently replied,—

"Years ago, your Majesty, I left Granada, bearing with me a burden which I held most precious. I was told by Tarik that those under my charge were in mortal danger—"

"Hold!" interposed Jusef, now pale with excitement—pale and flushed by turns. "Let us have thy story clearly and plainly. Who were those that thou didst bear away?"

Hafed took another time for thought, and finally he resumed:

"My story, O King, is this: I was servant to a nobleman of Elmora. My master died, and left in my charge his only child, a daughter, named Morgiana."

At this point the King started forward; but in a moment he restrained himself, and motioned for Hafed to go on.

"With my charge I retired to an estate in the mountains near to this city. When Morgiana had reached the age of seventeen she was as beautiful as the morning star, and her disposition was sweet and amiable as are the blessed dews and sunlight of Heaven. At this time a young man frequently visited our dwelling, and he loved Morgiana, and was loved in return. I would have put a barrier between them, but my mistress would not listen. In her great love she was blind to all else, and sought only the society of her lover for joy. This youth called himself Abdalla. He swore that he was of noble lineage—that his station was honorable, though at that time the persecution of enemies forced him to conceal himself from public gaze. The gentle maiden believed him fully, and loved him the more devotedly for his misfortune; and finally they were married.

"For a year after this Abdalla continued to visit his wife. He dared not live with us, nor dared he remove Morgiana from her own abode. He came once a week, and never remained more than a day at a time. A child was at length born to them—a boy—as fair and beautiful as are the lilies of the valley—and for a brief space thereafter Abdalla's visits were more frequent than usual. But finally, when the child had reached the age of four months, he ceased to come, and while my mistress was prostrated with grief on account of the absence of her beloved, Tarik, the King's jailer, came to me and informed me that the man whom I had known as Abdalla had been a state prisoner, escaped from his prison, and that he had been put to death. 'And now, O Hafed,' he said to me, 'make haste and flee with the wife and the infant child of the unhappy wretch, for if the lords of the land find them they will be sacrificed.'

"And Tarik spoke to me further, saying,—'Also, Hafed, when thou art fled from Granada, let it be as though Morgiana and her child were dead. Let them never again see the land of their birth!'

"Accordingly, O King, I told to Morgiana such story as I had heart to tell—I told her that her husband was dead, and that enemies would seek the life of herself and child if she remained near Granada—and she fled with me to Castile, where we have since abode."

The King, who had sank down upon the edge of the dais during this recital, now started up, and seized the old man by the arm.

"Hafed, speak to me truly. Let not thy words kill me. My heart is as the mountain quaking with internal fires, and my soul dieth within me if this mystery hath not a glorious solution. Where now is Morgiana?"

Tarik, instead of Hafed, made answer:

"O Master of my life, and King of thy people! Would'st thou behold Morgiana, the wife of thy youth, if she were yet living?"

"Tarik," replied the Monarch, with deep solemnity, "since the hour in which I lost my Morgiana my heart hath known no other love. During the years of my reign upon the throne of my fathers my soul hath been desolate. If my love liveth lead her to me, and I will bless God with my latest breath!"

Both Tarik and Hafed turned away and left the hall, and the King stood like one upon whom a mighty hand had fallen. Ben Ahmed stood apart, filled with amazement; while Miriam, equally amazed, found her heart regaining its life of hope under the light of the wondrous revelation in progress before her.

By and by the heavy arras suspended before the vaulted passage that led to the Court of the Myrtles was lifted aside, and Tarik entered, followed by Hafed. And Hafed led a female closely vailed; and behind him came Sir Manfred, with Sir Guy of St. Mark bringing up the rear.

At a word from Hafed the lady raised her vail, and lifted her face before the King. As she looked upon the monarch a quick cry broke from her lips. She called him by name—Abdalla!—and sprang toward him.

The King, when he saw the wondrous beauty of that face, even as it had been in the other years—a face from which not one bright ray of the loveliness he had so fondly cherished had departed—gave a great cry of joy, and opened wide his arms.

"Morgiana!—my Love!" he exclaimed, clasping her to his bosom, and holding her tightly there. "O! tell me I am not mad. This is no wild freak of fancy—no conjured spell of the Evil One?"

"Abdalla!" she murmured, looking up through her streaming tears, "I am thy Morgiana. And thou art my own Abdalla!"

"Thine own, dear one; but Abdalla no more. I am Jusef, King of Granada, and thou art my wife and my Sultana!"

A few brief moments of ecstatic silence, and then the monarch turned his gaze upon the youthful knight, and his heart swelled anew with the blissful hope now given by the story of that handsome face—the face which had startled him when he first beheld it, and which had haunted him ever since.

"Morgiana," he whispered, "this youth, whom thou callest Manfred?"

"Is my son and thine, O lord of my heart and life!" she answered.

Manfred had not been wholly unprepared for this. The sudden fear of Haroun upon beholding the talisman, and the quickly conceived plan of that Prince to put him to death, had led him to the belief that his person was of political importance in Granada; and from words since dropped by Hafed and Tarik he had gained a glimmer of the truth. But he had not anticipated the full measure of joy and honor that awaited him. His soul was filled with rapture as he rested upon the bosom of his father, and he found no difficulty in responding to the great love which Jusef poured upon him.

"O King," spoke Hafed, when he could with propriety be heard, "if it would not be too presumptuous for thy slave to make the request, wilt thou not make known to him those things which are still hidden."

"Thou would'st know of those early days when I came and tarried beneath thy roof, and learned to love thy mistress?" said Jusef, with a smile.

Hafed assented by a low bow.

And Morgiana, looking up with an earnest glance, reminded the King that she, too, was as yet in the dark.

"Know, then, my friends," pursued the monarch, "that in my youth I was seized and cast into prison by my wicked brother who had usurped the throne.—The usurper had gained control of the army, and his power was held while he lived. Tarik was the jailer to whose charge I was confided. Tarik became my friend, and allowed me great freedom for a prisoner. In time, when he had become assured of my good faith, and had come to believe that I would sooner die than break my word given to so true a friend, he allowed me to wander forth at night; and occasionally, when he could do so with safety to himself, he permitted me to remain away among the mountains through a night and a day. It was on one of my wanderings amid the wilds of the Sierra that I fell in with thee, good Hafed, and found my love. For a full year after my marriage I kept the secret so sacredly that Tarik suspected it not; but at length the usurper, from a cause to us unknown, ordered a more strict confinement of myself, and placed additional guards over me. This, of course, cut off entirely the liberty I had enjoyed, and when I found myself a close prisoner my grief and sorrow knew no bounds. In my great distress I made known to Tarik the circumstance of my marriage, and begged him to see my wife, and offer her such consolation as was in his power. The good man was filled with consternation. He declared if this thing should become known to the King not only he and myself, but my wife and child, and all connected with them, would be instantly put to death. Thus convinced he sought my beloved, and gave the warning of which you have already heard. He obeyed my wish in withholding my true name and estate, and in asserting that I was dead he did what he thought was best.

"Of the sudden death of my brother, and of my providential delivery, if you have not already heard, I will tell you at another time. For the present we will not borrow regrets for the past. After the long darkness the light of a glorious day hath come; and we will give thanks to God!"

* * *

Morgiana had told to the King the story of her wanderings, and of her marriage with the Castilian Count, and the King loved her none the less. But he said,—

"Since thou art to be my Sultana, and mother to the future King, our marriage shall be repeated in public."

And thus those attendants who had gathered to witness a nuptial ceremony were not disappointed.

In the midst of her joy the King observed a shadow of anxiety upon Morgiana's face, and he asked its cause; and she, resting upon his bosom, told him of the love of their son for the beautiful Ida of St. Ildefonso.

She had feared that a shadow would rest upon the royal brow, but she beheld only brightness and joy.

"And, if I mistake not," said Jusef, "there is still another story of love. I have already heard something of it. In this hour of joy I will make others happy if I can.—Where is the Knight of St. Mark?"

Sir Guy advanced to the dais and bent his head.

"Ben Ahmed, bring hither thy daughter."

The Alcaide obeyed; and Miriam stood trembling before the monarch.

"Sir Guy of St. Mark, dost love this Moorish maiden?"

"Your Majesty, my heart is not mine own—"

"Tut! tut!—Answer me direct. Dost love her?"

"With all my soul and strength."

"And thou, Miriam?"

Her look was enough; and her royal cousin would not force her to speak.

"Sir Guy, will the hand of the Princess Miriam compensate thee for thy service to our person?"

"Amply, sire."

"Then let this compensate thee, my sweet cousin, for the pain I have this day given thee."

And thus speaking the King descended, and joined the hands of the lovers together, and then called upon Ben Ahmed to add his blessing, which was freely and cheerfully done.

And next Jusef summoned Ida of St. Ildefonso, and when he had kissed her upon the brow in token of his paternal regard, he placed her hand in the keeping of his son, and blessed them both.

"God grant," he devoutly prayed, in contemplation of the joy and gladness he had made, "that from this double union may result a season of peace and prosperity and good-will between our two nations!"

And the prayer was not made in vain. Through the influence of the powerful houses of St. Ildefonso and St. Mark the Christian King was led to friendly relations with the Moslem; and during the remainder of Jusef's reign, and during the prosperous reign of his son who succeeded him, peace was between Granada and Castile.

THE END.

[A new and powerfully-written story, entitled

THE RIVAL SISTERS,

By Miss Eliza A. Dupuy,

will be commenced in the next number of the *Ledger*.]

—The most elevated and pure souls cannot hear, even from the lips of the most contemptible men, these words, *friendship, sensibility, virtue*, without immediately attaching to them all the grandeur of which their heart is susceptible.

THE SEVENTEENTH OF APRIL.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"Go away!" shrieked old Seth Dunoyer. "I know why you are all here, like vultures gathered round their prey. You want the little money I have saved, but you will not get it. I've put it safe out of your way, and I'll die with my secret in my heart."

That was the last he ever spoke. Half an hour afterward he was dead. So passed away the "Miser of Mainville."

Pretty Rose Dunoyer was his niece, and his only surviving relative.

When they came to examine the papers and possessions of the dead man, they found that his dying vaunt was but too true. He had been popularly supposed to be very wealthy.

Karl Winsboro and Rose Dunoyer were quietly married in the little village church at Mainville, and commenced housekeeping in the old farm-house, where the old miser had brooded for so many a dismal year.

"What *do* you suppose he could have done with it, Karl?" asked Rose, one night; for the mysterious disappearance of the miser's money furnished an ever-fruitful topic of conversation to the young couple.

"I don't know, Rose; but I intend to find out," calmly asserted Karl.

Rose left the table she was spreading, and came and leaned over his shoulder.

"Karl, what do you mean?"

"What I say, dear. I shall not let Uncle Seth's money interfere with my daily work for daily bread, but it shall be my constant study to search out its whereabouts at other times. I shall be a new Columbus, Rosie, discovering a continent of gold. Ah, you may smile and shake that wise little head of yours, but we shall see."

And Karl Winsboro set himself to work diligently, as he had said. Not an inch of the old board flooring but he examined separately; not a stone of the heavy, old-fashioned masonry but he tested and tried with hammer and chisel. He took up the broad flat hearth tiles, and probed the mortar under them; he sought for false backs to wall cupboards, and secret springs to bureau drawers. One old cabinet in particular, which had been the delight of Uncle Seth's heart, he had taken to pieces, reaping from that proceeding, however, naught but cobwebs and saw-dust."

"I told you it would be of no use, Karl," said Rose despondingly.

"Wait and see, little one," quoth Karl, in no whit disheartened by the oft-repeated failures he experienced.

He went, page by page, through Uncle Seth's library; it was not a weighty task, inasmuch as the collection consisted only of "Webster's Dictionary," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," "Captain Cooke's Voyages," and "The Vestiges of Creation," besides an old account-book, a "Speller and Definer," and an old almanac, whose year had long since mingled with the tides of the forgotten past. And while Rose was at her evening needle, fashioning tiny garments of a pattern long unknown in that ancient house, Karl worked his way through their mouldy pages with unwearying perseverance.

"Rosie," he said all of a sudden one frost-breathing September evening.

Rose was nearly asleep in the chimney corner; she opened her gray eyes wide.

"I've found a trace—the 'footprint on the sand' that Robinson Crusoe discovered in his desert island. Courage! my search has not been in vain. See!"

He showed her, in the age-yellowed almanac, a single date circled round by a pencil mark, drawn blackly.

It was April 17th.

"But what do you make of that?" asked Rose, with a puzzled face.

"Nothing, as yet. But I think it will lead us to the gold mine at last."

"How?"

"That's just what I don't know, dear. But, as I've said before, I intend to find out. The fourth month, the seventeenth day—four, seventeen." And Karl Winsboro plunged into a perfect maelstrom of meditative conjecture.

The next day he went to work. He probed every board in every floor that was seventeen feet by four from any given angle, or seventeen inches by four, or four by seventeen. He counted the bricks in the oven, the stones in the chimney stack; but all in vain. The magic numbers, as Rose laughingly called them, led to no result.

So far Seth Dunoyer's dying words had proved true. He had perished, and kept his own secret in his heart.

"The seventeenth of April!" mused Karl. "Old Dunoyer never marked that date for nothing. It was not his wedding-day, for he never was married. It was not his birth-day, for he came into the world within the autumn rains, on the 21st of November. It was not a gala-day, for he never had any dates but seedtime and harvest. But—the door of the mystery is locked, and I cannot find the key."

So Karl, baffled, yet not disheartened, left off looking, yet still kept the search within his consciousness.

The harvest was over; the corn on the mellow upland slopes was all husked, and the great yellow pumpkins were gathered into the barn; the maple leaves lay piled in red layers about the paths, and the bush of white chrysanthemums was all crested with snowy blossoms, at the door stone. And Karl was busy making a new garden on the south side of the house, for the next spring to wake into greenness and fertility.

"I suppose you will want a row of currant bushes?" he said, laughing, to Rose. "You women always do."

"To be sure," said Rose gravely. "Currant jelly, you know, Karl. And there is such a wilderness of bushes down by the old sealed-up well, for all you killed the best of them when you dug up the stones to look for Uncle Seth's money."

"Exactly," said Karl. "That was before I knew anything about the seventeenth of April."

"Nonsense!" said Rose, a little petulantly. She was beginning to get tired of the "seventeenth of April."

"Well," said Karl, with a grimace, "come on and pick out your own bushes, and I'll set 'em in a straight row along the garden fence. How many will be enough? Ten?"

"Ten, indeed!" cried Rose. "Twenty-four, at the very least."

And with this she went out to the tangle of bushes that grew in straggling, irregular rows in the angle of the stone fence.

"Take this one first, Karl," said she. "It's a Giant White."

And then she began counting the number of bushes—one, two, three, four, and so up to seventeen.

"This is the seventeenth one, eh?" said Karl, balancing his spade in the air.

"And the fourth row from the wall," added Rose unconsciously.

Karl's eyes brightened. He struck his spade vigorously into the ground.

"I accept the omen!" he said.

"Karl, what do you mean?"

"This!" he cried, as the spade struck with a dull *thud* against some solid body below—a square stone—which he heaved up as if it had been but a feather's weight. Underneath lay an oblong iron box heavily clamped, and secured with iron hasps.

"What do you think of the seventeenth of April now, Rose?" triumphantly demanded the young husband.

The key to the riddle was found at last: the trifling memorandum which Seth Dunoyer had made to assist his own failing memory, had led to discovery. Rose had come into her fortune!

"But, Karl," cried Rose, as she leaned over her husband's shoulder, and looked down into the box of tarnished golden treasure, "isn't it strange?"

"Strange! No," said Winsboro thoughtfully. "The longer I live, Rosie, the more I begin to realize how many marvellous occurrences there are in the world. And I always had a firm faith that something would come of the Seventeenth of April."

WIT AND HUMOR.

A Frightful Demonstration.—A well-dressed man, who was passing along Fourth street the other night, was insulted by a ruffian who seemed bent on attacking him, whereupon he drew a shining pair of forceps from his pocket, and shouting, "I'm a dentist, and am going for your teeth!" he rushed at the ruffian, who, seeming to have all the natural terrors of a dentist come upon him, turned and incontinently fled.

A boy was taken before a Tombs magistrate the other morning, and on being asked his occupation, he frankly answered, "Stealing." "Your candor astonishes me!" said the magistrate. "I thought 'twould," responded the lad, "seeing as how many big ones there be around here in the same business as are ashamed to own up to it."

In a recent debate, a member of the California Legislature exclaimed, "The Hon. gentleman from Calaveras county is undoubtedly a person of great abilities—a man of talent—a natural-born genius; but there is one thing which I defy him to do, and that is, *to bite the bottom out of a frying-pan without smutting his nose.*"

An Arkansas husband pursued his runaway wife nearly two hundred miles, and when he finally overtook the terrified fugitive, it was found that he only wanted to hand her a set of false teeth, which, in the excitement of her flight, she had forgotten to take with her.

A naughty boy said to his mother, "You see, ma, you 're always telling me to behave as well to the family as I do to company; but why don't *you* behave the same to *me* as you do to company, and ask me to have another piece of pie, or some more of the pudding?"

A man who was presented with the bill for his wife's spring outfit the other day, looked at it for a while with dilating eyes, and then muttered, "It was lucky for Adam that he only had to foot the bill for the fashions of the *fall*—for which he hardly cared a fig-leaf."

"Fred.," said a father to his son, "I hear that you and your wife quarrel and wrangle every day. Let me warn you against such a fatal practice." "Whoever told you that, father, was totally mistaken; my wife and I haven't spoken to one another for a month."

The Savannah *News* boasts of a contributor "who has recently changed his style from prose to poetry, inaugurating the change with 'A Sonnit too a Violett,' which he thinks will be a success, on account of the neat way in which he makes heifer rhyme with zephyr."

At a young ladies' debating club the following question was recently discussed: Which gives a girl most pleasure, to hear herself praised, or another girl run down? No decision was arrived at.

Darwin is said to be "filled with delight" because reports come from Buenos Ayres that several monkeys in that region have died with the yellow-fever, just like human beings.

What is the difference between a chime of bells and the average run of office-holders? The bells peal from the steeple, and the office-holders steal from the people.

"My dear," said a husband to his wife, "do you think a stove-pipe hat is unbecoming to me?" "It is, decidedly, when it is too much stove," replied the wife.

The reason assigned for so many ladies learning to play the violin of late years is, that the idea of having four strings to their bow is irresistible.

An enthusiastic musical lumberman in Maine is reported to be working up a saw log sixty feet long into a fife for the great Boston jubilee.

The best way to use the mad-stone so as to fend off hydrophobia is to throw it with great violence at the dog before he bites you.

Why is the ambition to become the lion of a drinking party an ignoble one? Because to gratify it one has to make a beast of himself.

In Danbury, Conn., when a boy has the fever and ague they make him useful by setting him to shake carpets.

If you would get the exact weight of a fish, weigh him in his own scales.

The tune of the smoker and of the tobacco chewer is the spit-tune.

All South Carolina people who have pains go to Aiken.

What tree is nearest the sea? The beech.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A communist woman, sentenced to be shot, in Paris, was taken out and stationed against a wall, a large crowd of street people gathering. Just as the soldiers were about to fire, she raised her hands, and exclaimed, "Hold an instant!" The soldiers paused. The woman had on a good outer garment; this she took off, and going up to a woman in the crowd in rags, she said, "Take this; it is a pity to spoil good clothes." Then she returned to her place, and was shot.

At an inquest upon the body of a girl in Vermont, the evidence proved conclusively that the deceased came to her death by eating arsenic to beautify her complexion. She had been in the habit of eating cloves, chalk, etc., for the same purpose, and having seen in a newspaper that some ladies ate arsenic to whiten their skin, she took some of the poison for that purpose, with fatal results.

A boy named Frederick Scaddin, of Portland, Mich., aged sixteen, was tempted by an older companion to steal money from his father. After the theft, both of the boys left town, but Scaddin, having repented, returned, and being told that his father was after him with the sheriff, he shot himself near his home, although his mother was entreating him to come into the house.

A Bostonian had a contract for supplying the city with grain. He was elected Alderman, and at once notified Boston's purchasing agent that, during his term of office, the city must purchase its grain of somebody else. "There's an honest man," said the people. But he made over thirty thousand dollars by getting rid of his contract.

A Los Angeles photographer was surprised one morning recently, by some parties bringing a corpse, wrapped up in a blanket, to his office to be photographed. The deceased had just been lynched, and it was thought that the exhibition of a picture of his corpse would have a healthy effect in that region.

Mr. William Everett, son of Hon. Edward Everett, has gone to live in the Holmes house, at Cambridge, and thither taken his father's library. That is the house in which the Revolutionary hero, General Warren, rested, on his way to Breed's Hill, where he was killed.

A fine boy, six years old, whose parents live in New Hampshire, fell upon a pair of shears, a few days ago, and the blade, which penetrated back of his ear, was driven through the skull into the brain about four inches, inflicting what was supposed to be a fatal wound.

At a recent wedding in this city, a bride-cake was exhibited weighing forty pounds. It was in the shape of a house three stories high, and ornamented with flags, bow-windows, balconies and Cupids, with a newly married couple of sugar coming out of the door.

A young man recently married, in Ludlow, Vt., who carried a piece of cyanide of potassium for the purpose of removing stains from his hands so as to make them look white, accidentally swallowed it one evening, and it killed him in just thirty minutes.

A gentleman recently died in a fit, at Goshen, N. H. A few days afterward information was received by his family of the death of two of his cousins, living in different States, who died at the same hour on which he expired, and of fits similar to his.

A gentleman who visited a soap factory in Chelsea, a few days ago, accidentally fell into a vat of hot boiling soap and was scalded terribly. He was got out and carried home. No hopes were entertained of his recovery.

A negro was rescued alive, at Charlottesville, Va., recently, after lying at the bottom of a well, covered with about fifty feet of earth and stones, for nine hours. He was but slightly injured.

A widower, forty years of age, committed suicide at Oakland, Cal., a few weeks ago, while laboring under intense excitement occasioned by the refusal, by a young lady, of his offer of marriage.

It is believed by shrewd politicians that every Member of Congress who votes for a continuation of the odious income tax will be elected to stay at home for the rest of his life.

A young man living in Columbus, Ga., sent insulting notes to the daughter of a physician in that city, and the father meeting him in the street, drew a pistol and shot him dead.

A woman in England has been arrested for chloroforming women, and cutting off and stealing their hair.

POVERTY'S FLOWERS.

BY LOUISE S. UPHAM.

"Poor?" Well, I guess so! It's a hard time for all;
There's not been much driving since early last fall;
And my rent must be paid, or into the street
We go, "bag and baggage," our neighbors to meet.
And there's lights, and there's coal, and a good bit of wood,
And so many mouths that are clam'rous for food—
No wonder that poor folks can't manage to live
On the miserable pittance their taskmasters give!

I have not had great wages, like some, but my door
Was never besieged by the gaunt wolf before;
But I've not had a day's work since winter set in!
There's no flour in the bag, and no coal in the bin,
Nor "oil in the cruse;" and the promise that cheers
The widow and orphan isn't meant for my ears;
For so little I get, for light jobs here and there,
Like the Prodigal, fain would I make *husks* my fare.

And then we've had sickness, to crown all the rest,
And another stray bird found its way to our nest.
"No pushing or crowding" is our rule; so you see,
No matter how many, we are sure to agree.
But I think, if the *ravens* don't come by and by,
That fed 'Lijah of old, and heed my bairns' cry,
The *robins*, that covered "the babes in the wood,"
Will be called on for blankets for some of my brood!

You have dropped in upon us, and find us, to-day,
Rather poor, I admit; and your thoughts seem to say,
"Bare floors and bare walls! what a cold, cheerless room,
With a lone candle's flicker to lighten its gloom!
On the shelves, so near empty, there's left but the ghost
Of a chicken, to hint what a full meal would cost."
Yet this dreary old room blossoms out with bright flowers,
With perfumes as rare as grace Beauty's own bowers!

"You are sure you don't see any?" Perhaps not; they are shy
Of unfolding their petals when strangers are nigh;
But their roots are deep down in our hearts, and they live
And they thrive on the sunshine our loving souls give.
Pleasant words, cheery tones and kind acts are cheap,
And bountiful harvests their givers all reap.
There be rainbows, with huge pots of gold at each end,
But home's hearthstone hath riches still surer, my friend.

What doves are more fair than the little bare feet
That run pattering out, my coming to greet?
What lilies, in all their pure bloom, can compare
With the eager-stretched hands that are fluttering there?
What sunshine more royal than the row of bright heads
That I tuck every night, with a kiss, in their beds?
'You are sure you don't envy me!" Well, I hope not;
There might not be room for us both in one lot.

"Contented and easily pleased!" Well, I know
Not all the good gifts come to *one* man, and so
I leave you your jewels, your silver and gold,
Content if I miss not one lamb from my fold.
Give me plenty of work—a whole loaf of bread—
Give not wealth, but the blossoms of childhood instead—
And I tell you, we'll own, my good wife and I,
A regal flower-garden!—Good-bye, sir, good-bye.

◆

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER CIII.

A FATAL JOURNEY.

> Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
> Accursed and in a cursed hour, she hies. MILTON.

On that Wednesday morning the fine steamer *Pocahontas* lay at her wharf receiving freight and passengers for Washington and Alexandria.

Her decks were crowded with men, women and children, all either going on the voyage, or "seeing off" departing friends and acquaintances.

Among the passengers on the forward deck stood a slight, elegant, graceful woman, clothed in widow's weeds and deeply vailed.

This was, of course, Mary Grey, bound upon her baleful errand.

She had spent the intervening Tuesday with her infatuated instrument, Craven Kyte. But when he pleaded to attend her to the boat and see her off, she forbade his doing so on pain of an eternal separation from her.

But she renewed their agreement that he should follow her in twelve hours, and meet her at a designated place in Philadelphia on Friday morning.

And she stayed with him until quite late in the evening, and finally left him comforted with the hope of a speedy meeting and a certain marriage.

For the edification of her landladies, the precise Miss Cranes, she trumped up a story that at once explained the necessity of her sudden journey North, and, as usual, redounded to her own credit.

She had received a telegram, she said, from a friend who had just lost her father, and who was in great affliction. And she must go on immediately to comfort that bereaved soul.

The Miss Cranes, as usual, thought she was an angel in woman's form, and bade her Heaven speed on her benevolent errand.

And now she stood upon the deck of the *Pocahontas*, waiting for that travelling companion whom she had fatally beguiled to be her escort.

The boat was getting up her steam, and yet he had not made his appearance.

What if he should not come, after all?

Just as she asked this question it was answered by his rapid approach.

He came up, travelling bag in hand, happy, smiling, radiant.

"Mrs. Grey, I have been looking for you all over the boat. I feared that I had missed you," he said gayly, holding out his hand.

"I have been waiting for you here," she answered, with a smile.

"I am glad to find you at last. But will you not come into the cabin? The deck is not a pleasant place while the boat is at the wharf," he said, as he offered her his arm.

She thanked him with a smile, took his arm, and let him lead her into the saloon.

It was at that moment empty of other visitors. And those two were tête-à-tête.

He gave her a pleasant seat, placed himself beside her, and then and there he told her of his betrothal to Emma Cavendish.

Of course she already knew all about it. But he was not aware of her knowledge. And his motives in announcing the intelligence to her was evident even to Mary Grey's vanity-blinded mind. It was to set their *own* relations at once upon a true basis, and prevent all misunderstanding and all false hopes growing out of their long-lost love.

Although she had known all this so well before he spoke of it, yet it required all her powers of self-control and duplicity to listen quietly while he spoke of her rival, and to affect a sympathy with his happiness.

Yet she did this so well that he was thoroughly deceived.

"It was all a foolish mistake our fancying we loved each other so much, was it not, Alden, dear?" she inquired, with an arch smile.

"I think so," he answered, quite frankly.

"I am glad to hear you admit that, for now we can understand each other and be good friends, and nothing more," she added sweetly.

"Yes, good friends always, Mary," he agreed.

He was so happy in his blessed love for Emma Cavendish that he felt kindly toward all the world, and especially toward this "friendless young widow," as he called her.

"But you know, Alden, that it is quite common for young men of earnest souls like yours to take a liking to women older than themselves."

"You were not older than myself, Mary."

"Not in years, perhaps, but oh! ever so much in suffering, and in the bitter knowledge of the world it brings. And thus, for this reason, I was no proper wife for a happy young man like you. No young man should ever marry a widow, and no young girl should ever marry a widower. Our fancied love for each other was a mistake, dear Alden, and I am very glad it was discovered before it was rendered irremediable."

"So am I," replied the young man quite frankly. "But, dear Mary, I hope you will henceforth look upon me and my dearest Emma as your brother and sister, for we will be truly such in *deed* as well as in word to you," he added, with grave gentleness.

"I know you will; I feel certain of that. And I thank you from my heart, while I rejoice in your happiness. Yours will be a good, wise and beautiful marriage with Emma, Alden," she murmured with emotion.

"Yes, I think so too. Thanks be to Heaven," replied the young man, reverently bowing his head.

The steamer was now pushing off from her wharf amid much pulling, hauling, hallooing and shouting.

You couldn't "hear yourself think," even in the cabin, for a while.

"We are off, I believe," said Mary Grey at length, when the uproar had subsided, and they were moving swiftly and smoothly along.

"Yes. Will you come on deck? It is pleasanter there now," said Alden, rising and offering her his arm.

She took it with a smile, and let him lead her up on deck.

And as they promenaded slowly up and down, enjoying the fine September morning and the beautiful river scenery, Mary Grey drew him on to speak of Emma Cavendish.

Of course the young lover desired no better theme.

And in this way, leading him to discourse of his love, listening to him with attention, pretending sympathy with his happiness, she effected several objects important to the success of her demoniac plot. She pleased him with himself and with her. She dispelled his suspicions, if any still lurked in his candid soul, and she kept him always near her, talking with her, and unconsciously attracting the attention of their fellow-voyagers and leading them to believe that this handsome young man, speaking so earnestly in such low tones to his companion, and the lovely youthful widow, who was listening to him with such rapt attention, were a pair of happy and devoted lovers.

Thus passed the forenoon.

When the early steamboat dinner was ready, he took her down to the table, sat beside her, and assiduously attended to her wants.

After dinner, when she was disinclined to walk or to talk, he brought out some newspapers and magazines and sat down beside her on deck, and they read together.

At tea-time he took her down to the table again.

And after tea, as the September night was cool upon the water, they sat down at one of the cabin tables and played checkers together until it was time to retire.

And thus all day long and all the evening through, in the sight of all the people, Alden Lytton unconsciously conducted himself, as Mary Grey intended that he should, like her betrothed lover.

In due time they reached Washington, and crossed the length of the city to take the train for Philadelphia, where they arrived late on Thursday night.

"Have you any preference for one hotel over another?" inquired Alden, as they stood amid the horrible din of contesting hackmen, porters, 'bus-drivers, et cetera.

"None whatever," she answered.

"Then we'll go to the Blank House, if you have no objection."

"None. We will go there."

"Here's your Blank House 'bus!" shouted a driver above all the other shouts.

"Oh! don't let us get into that crowded stage! A carriage, please," pleaded Mary Grey.

And Alden Lytton, believing her fastidiousness and timidity to be real and not affected, and withal feeling bound to be guided by her wishes, called a carriage and put her into it.

As they were rolling rapidly on their way to the Blank House, Mary Grey shivered and suddenly said:

"Oh! please, when we get to that great rambling hotel, do not let them put me away off in a room in a remote part of the house by myself or among total strangers. I always feel so frightened in a great hotel. And I am always sure to lose myself, or do something ridiculous, or get into trouble, whenever I attempt to find my way through the labyrinth of halls and passages between the bedrooms and parlors. Will you please take care of me?"

"I will take the same care of you that I would take of my sister Laura. I will see that you have a room adjoining my own," answered Alden Lytton unsuspiciously, and smiling indulgently at what he thought her childish cowardice.

When their carriage reached the Blank House, he took her up to the reception room and left her there, while he went to the office and engaged apartments for himself and for her.

And then he came for her, attended by a porter, who loaded himself with their travelling bags, umbrellas and so forth, and led the way up two pairs of stairs to a little suit of apartments, consisting of two small chambers, with a small parlor between them.

They entered the parlor first, where communicating doors on the right and left led into opposite chambers.

The porter put down the luggage, received his fee, and retired.

"I hope you like these rooms, Mrs. Grey. The two chambers are exactly alike; but if you have a preference, please take it," said Alden pleasantly.

"It does not matter the least. I will go in here," answered Mary Grey, opening the right-hand door and disappearing through it, with her travelling bag in her hand.

She found every convenience for making a clean toilet there. And when she had refreshed herself with a wash and a change of dress, she reëntered the little parlor, where she found supper laid on the table, and an attentive waiter at hand.

"I ordered supper here because I remembered your fastidiousness, and thought you would prefer this to the public dining-room," explained Alden.

"Thanks! Oh, I do like it ever so much better! I cannot endure the public rooms," said Mary Grey, as she took the seat the obsequious waiter placed for her.

"Anything more, if you please, sir?" inquired the man.

"N-n-no," answered Alden hesitatingly; for in fact, if he could have found a fair excuse, he would have preferred to have the waiter remain in attendance. The man bowed, and left the room.

CHAPTER CIV.

THE SERPENT AT WORK.

> One sole desire, one passion, now remains
> To keep life's fever still within her veins.
> For this alone she lives—like lightning's fire,
> To speed one bolt of ruin—and expire. BYRON.

Alden sat down at the table, and began to carve a roasted chicken.

While he was intent upon his task, Mary Grey drew from her watch pocket a little folded paper. With her eyes upon him, to be sure that he was not observing her, she deftly poured a white powder from this paper into one of the coffee-cups, and then quickly returned the empty paper to her watch pocket.

Meanwhile he had taken off the liver wing from the roasted chicken, and placed it on a warm plate, which he passed to her.

"Will you have a cup of coffee now, or afterward?" she inquired, as she took the offered plate.

"Now, please. Coffee is the most refreshing of all beverages after a fatiguing journey," he added, as he received the cup from her hands.

It was a very nice supper, yet neither of them seemed inclined to eat.

Mary Grey trifled with her chicken wing, tasted her milk toast, and sipped a little coffee. She looked pale, frightened and self-concentrated.

Alden Lytton drank his coffee, remarking, with a smile, that it was very, very strong, in fact quite bitter in its strength.

And when he had finished it, he pushed the cup away, saying that it had quite satisfied him, and deprived him of the inclination to take anything else.

As he said this, he looked at his companion, and noticed for the first time the ghastliness of her countenance.

"Mrs. Grey, are you ill?" he inquired, in some alarm.

"No; only fatigued from that railway journey. The train always shakes me into a jelly," she answered, shivering.

"How very delicate you are, poor child! It is a great pity you should ever be called to bear any of the roughness of life. And when my dear Emma and I have a home together, we must take care to shield you from all that," he said.

And then he sank into a sudden silence, while she watched him closely.

"Will *you* not take anything?" she inquired.

"No, thank you. That coffee was no doubt very fine; but it was a bitter draught, and it has taken away my appetite for anything else," he answered, with a smile and a half-suppressed yawn.

"Are *you* not well?" she next inquired.

"Oh, yes; quite well; never better in my life," he answered, putting his hands before his lips to conceal an irrepressible yawn.

"But you also seem very tired."

"No, only deliciously sleepy, as if I would like to go to sleep and never wake up again," he said, with a laugh and a smothered gape.

"Then do not stand on ceremony with an old friend like me. Bid me good-night and go at once," she said.

"And you?" he inquired.

"I am too tired to go to sleep yet. I shall sit in that rocking-chair and rock gently. That motion will soothe and rest me better than anything else, and after an hour I shall be able to go to bed and go to sleep."

As Mary Grey spoke, Alden Lytton staggered to his feet, and tottered toward her, held out his hand, and faltered drowsily:

"I am forced to take your advice. I must retire at once, or I shall not be able to reach my room. I never felt so overpowered by sleep in all my life before. Good-night, my dear Mrs. Grey. I hope that you will sleep as well as I am sure that I shall. Good-night."

He pressed her hand, and then groping like a blind man, he passed into his own room and shut the door behind him.

Mary Grey gazed breathlessly at the closed door for a while, murmuring to herself:

"I doubt if that fellow will be able to divest himself of his outer garments before he falls down headlong in a dead stupor. I have him in my power now! I have him in my power now! At last! At last! Oh, yes! Oh, yes, Miss Cavendish, you will marry him, will you not? And you, Stephen Lyle, how proud you will be to have his sister for your wife, and himself for a brother-in-law! But I must cover up my tracks," she added suddenly, as she went around to his vacated place at the table, and took his empty cup and rinsed it out carefully several times, throwing the water into the empty grate, where it soon dried up. Then she poured some of the coffee grounds from her own cup into the rinsed cup to conceal the rinsing. Finally she drew from her watch pocket the little white paper from which she had poured the powder into the coffee-cup, and she held it in the blaze of the gaslight until it was burned to ashes.

Then she sat down in the rocking chair, and smiled as she rested.

At intervals she bent her head toward the door leading into Alden Lytton's room and listened; but she heard no sound of life in there.

She sat on in the rocker until the striking of a large clock somewhere in the neighborhood aroused her.

It was twelve o'clock.

Midnight!

She arose and cautiously opened the door leading into Alden Lytton's room.

She looked in like a thief.

The gas was turned down very low; but by its dim light she saw him sleeping a heavy, trance-like sleep.

She went into the room, and to the door leading into the passage and bolted it.

Then she closed every window-shutter and drew down every window shade, and let down the heavy moreen curtains, making all dark.

Then she returned to the parlor, closed the intervening door, and threw herself into the rocking chair and closed her eyes, in the vain endeavor to rest and sleep.

But sleep and rest were far from her that night.

The clock struck one.

All sounds even about that busy hotel gradually ceased. The house was still, awfully still, yet she could not sleep.

The clock struck two.

She started up with a shiver, exclaiming:

"I cannot sleep; but I can go to bed and lie there."

And she went into her own room and went to bed, but not to rest.

She heard the clock strike in succession every hour of the night, until it finally struck four.

Then, when the people of the house were beginning to stir, she, overcome with fatigue and watching, at length fell asleep.

As usual in such cases of long night watching and early morning sleep, she slept long into the forenoon.

When she awoke and looked at her watch, she found it was nine o'clock.

She arose in haste and dressed herself.

This was the morning in which she was to meet her unconscious confederate in crime, Craven Kyte.

As soon as she was dressed she went into the parlor, where, it appeared, the waiter with his pass key had already been before her, for the remains of the last night's supper had been carried away and the room had been restored to order.

She then listened at Alden Lytton's door.

All was dark as a vault and still as death there.

She opened the door cautiously and went in.

He was still sleeping a death-like sleep in the pitch-dark room. She went and looked to the door leading into the passage, and found it still bolted.

Then she came out of the room, locked the door between it and the parlor, and so isolated the sleeper from all the house.

Lastly she put on her bonnet and shawl and walked out. She walked down the street for several blocks, and then hailed an empty cab that was passing and engaged it to take her to a certain picture shop in a distant part of the city.

It was at this shop that she had engaged to meet Craven Kyte that morning at ten o'clock.

A half-hour's rapid drive brought her to the place.

On arriving, she got out, paid and dismissed the cab, and entered the shop.

It was not yet ten o'clock, nor had her intended tool and victim yet made his appearance.

It was also too early for the usual customers of the establishment.

But a polite clerk came forward and placed a catalogue and a small telescope in her hands, that she might the better examine the pictures.

"Thank you. I would like to look at a city Directory first, if you please," she said, as she put aside the catalogue and the telescope.

The clerk handed her the required volume.

She turned to the church directory, and looked down its columns until she found what she seemed to be in search of.

And then she marked it with a pencil and closed the book.

At that moment Craven Kyte entered the shop.

On catching sight of her whom he loved and came to meet, his face lighted up with joy, and he hastened toward her.

But she held up a warning finger to him, and in obedience to its signal he moderated his transports and came to her quietly.

"This is no place to make demonstrations of that sort," she said. "Here, take your pencil and a bit of paper and copy off this address for me," she added, opening the Directory and pointing to the name she had marked.

"The Rev. Mr. Borden, No. —, ——— street," said Craven Kyte, reading the address that he had copied.

"That will do; now come along. We will go straight to that reverend gentleman's house," said Mary Grey.

And they left the shop together.

"Oh, Mary, my love! my love! How tantalizing it is to me to meet you here in public, where I may scarcely take your dear hand, when my heart is nearly breaking with its repressed feelings!" he whispered, in eager tones.

"You impatient boy, you are worse than any spoiled child!" she said archly.

"Oh, Mary! my love! my lady! you will keep your promise! You will be mine today?" he pleaded.

"I will be yours within two hours, upon one condition."

"Name it! name it!" he eagerly exclaimed.

"*You must not marry me under your own name, but under that of Alden Lytton.*"

When she had said this, she stole a glance at him to see how he took it, and she was somewhat abashed by the look of unutterable amazement on the honest face of the young man.

"Come, what do you say to that?" she inquired.

"My dear Mary, what an astounding proposition!" he exclaimed.

"But you will agree to it?"

He was silent.

"You will agree to this, because you love me," she added.

But he continued silent and very sad.

"You will agree to do this, for the sake of making me your wife?" she persisted.

"My dearest Mary, it is impossible!" he answered with a painful effort.

"There! I knew it. Say no more. You professed great love for me once. You were willing to do, dare, or die for me, if necessary. You wished me to put you to the test, to TRY you, as you called it. Yet the very first time I have tested your sincerity, you have failed me, as I foresaw that you would. Good-bye, Mr. Craven Kyte. We part here, and we part for ever," said Mary Grey, with cold contempt, as she turned away from him.

"No, no, no! for Heaven's sake, no!" cried the young man piteously. "Do not leave me so suddenly. Give me time to think. Oh, I cannot, cannot part with you. I must, must have you at any cost!" he muttered to himself.

She stopped, and contemplated him as with scornful pity.

"Come, come into the square here and sit down. Let us talk this matter over. Pray do. Oh, I cannot lose you so!" he pleaded, seizing her hand.

"Well, I will go in and sit on one of those benches for a few moments, and give you the opportunity of recovering your place in my confidence," she said, with a sort of contemptuous pity, as she turned and entered the square.

He followed her immediately, and they sat down together.

CHAPTER CV.

A WICKED WEDDING

> Bid me to leap
> From off the battlements of yonder tower
> And I will do it. SHAKESPEARE.

"Now tell me what you wish me to do, and why you wish me to do it," said the lover submissively.

"I have already told you *what* I wish you to do. *Why* I wish you to do it must remain my secret for the present. You must trust me. Oh, Craven!" she added, suddenly changing her tone to one of soft, sorrowful pleading, "*why* will you not trust *me*, when I am about to trust *you* with the happiness of my whole future life?"

"I *do* trust you—I trust you, as I love you, without limit!" answered the poor fellow, almost weeping.

"Ah! you *say* you do, yet you refuse to do as I wish you," sorrowfully replied the siren.

"I refuse no longer! I will do anything in the world you wish me to do with joy, if in that way I can have you for my own," he declared, with tearful emphasis.

"I knew you would. You are a dear, good, true heart, and I love you more than life!" she said, giving his arm a squeeze. "Listen now."

He became suddenly all devoted attention, as she artfully unfolded to him just as much of her nefarious plan as was absolutely necessary to secure his coöperation in it. The whole of her scheme in all its diabolical wickedness she dared not expose to his honest soul.

She told him now that she had set her mind on a harmless practical joke, to win a wager with Emma Cavendish.

She said that he must go with her to see the Rev. Mr. Borden, rector of St. —— Church, and ask him to perform the marriage ceremony between them. And that he must give his own name as Mr. Alden Lytton, attorney at law, Richmond, Virginia, and give her name as it was—Mrs. Mary Grey, of the same city. And that they must be married under those names.

The young man stared until his black eyes looked big as old Booth's in the last scene of Richard.

"But why?" he inquired.

"A practical joke, I tell you. Ah, how hard you are to manage! Why can you not trust me through a little mystery like this—a little practical joke like this?"

"I *do* trust you; but I am afraid that it might seem like a practical forgery to be married under another person's name," he replied.

"Nonsense! Do you think that I could be such an idiot as to implicate you in any act that might be construed into forgery, practical or otherwise?" she inquired with a light laugh.

"O no, certainly you are not the lady to do that," he admitted.

"Well, then, what next? You look as solemn as a judge or an owl."

"I am afraid also, that if I should be married under any other name than my own, our marriage itself might turn out to be nothing more than a practical joke instead of a legal union."

"Mr. Kyte!" she suddenly exclaimed, with her eyes flashing fire. "You insult me! Am *I* the sort of woman that would compromise my good name in a marriage of doubtful legality?"

"O no, certainly you would not. Nor did I mean that. I earnestly beg your pardon," said Craven penitently.

"You are a silly gander, and a dear, darling duck of a boy! And I love you! But you must understand that I know what I am about. And you must trust me; you must *trust* me; and once for all, you must TRUST me," she said archly, giving his arm another squeeze.

"I do, I do. Come. Shall we be going? I am on the rack till our wedding is over."

"Yes, but we must take a cab. The distance is a long one."

"There is a cab stand a couple of blocks from here. I noticed it as I came along. We will take one there, if you please."

She assented, and they walked on to the stand and engaged a cab.

When they were seated in it Craven Kyte ordered the cabman to drive to the rectory of St. —— Church.

Half an hour's driving brought them to their destination.

When the cab drew up to the door of the house Craven was about to alight, when Mary Grey stopped him.

"Wait," she said. And taking from her card case a pencil and a blank card, she wrote upon it the name:

"MR. ALDEN LYTTON."

"Send that in," she said, handing the card to the bewildered young man.

Craven Kyte took it, looked at it attentively, and then exclaimed:

"Why, that is exactly like Mr. Lytton's own handwriting. If I had not seen you write it, I should have taken it to be his autograph."

"Should you? So much the better. But never mind that now. Go and do as I told you."

He alighted immediately and went up to the door of the house. He rang the bell, and sent in the card by the servant who answered it.

After the lapse of a few moments, the servant came back with a very favorable message.

Craven Kyte returned to the cab, and whispered:

"Mr. Borden is at home and will see us. Come."

And he assisted her to alight.

And they went into the rectory, and were shown by the servant into the study of the rector.

Mary Grey courtesied to the gray-haired, dignified clergyman, who arose to receive her; but she kept her vail down, as she took her seat in the chair he placed for her.

Craven Kyte then drew the reverend gentleman aside, and spoke to him in a low voice.

Mr. Borden nodded and nodded as the speaker proceeded.

When he had finished speaking, the rector inquired:

"Both of legal age?"

"Both of more than legal age, and both quite independent of others," answered Craven Kyte.

"I merely asked the question because in cases of this kind I prefer that the parties should be of legal age, *though*, were they minors, I should feel it to be my duty to marry them all the same, because, I think, when a youth and maiden run away with each other, the best thing a Christian minister can do for them is to tie them together for life."

"I am a bachelor of twenty-two years of age, and my chosen wife is a widow of twenty-one. We take this simple method of getting married for economy and convenience, and for no other reason; for there is no one in the world who has either the power or the will to prevent us," said Craven Kyte.

"Very well, Mr. Lytton; I am ready to wait on you. I prefer, however, to solemnize marriage in the church, when possible. There must be witnesses also. And if you have none at hand, the sexton and some members of his family can serve."

Craven Kyte winced at the prospect of all those formalities.

"I thought that in the Quaker City marriage was a matter of less form," he said.

"Yes, among Quakers; but even they must have witnesses. If you and the lady will go into the church, I will join you there in a few minutes. You will find the doors open and the sexton in the building, preparing for the usual Friday afternoon service," said the rector.

And Craven Kyte again offered his arm to his companion, and led her out of the rectory, and into the church.

It was evident from all signs that the interior had just been swept out.

And an old man and a young woman whom Craven Kyte and his companion rightly guessed to be the sexton and the sexton's daughter, were busily engaged in dusting the pews.

Craven Kyte and Mary Grey sat down upon a front seat before the altar, to wait until the rector should make his appearance.

Mr. Borden did not keep them long in suspense. He soon entered, dressed in his surplice, and took his place within the chancel.

The candidates for matrimony advanced and stood before him.

He beckoned the sexton and the sexton's daughter to draw near and stand as witnesses.

And they came up, dusting brushes in hand, and stood staring while the ceremony was performed.

After the preliminary exhortation and prayers, the important questions were put:

"Will you, Alden, take Mary to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony?" and so forth, and so forth, and so forth.

To which Craven Kyte, turning pale at his own unwilling duplicity in answering to a false name, replied:

"I WILL."

"Will you, Mary, take Alden to be your wedded husband?" and so forth, and so forth.

To which Mary Grey answered firmly:

"I WILL."

And the ring was placed upon her finger. And the marriage vows were solemnly repeated, the last prayer said and the benediction pronounced.

It was all over.

"'*Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.*'"

The newly married pair were about to turn from the altar, when the rector said:

"Come with me into the vestry for a moment."

And they followed him into the vestry, attended by the two witnesses.

The rector made an entry into a large book, and then called upon the bridegroom and the bride to sign their names.

Again Craven Kyte turned pale as death as he registered the false name under which he had been married.

But his companion wrote her name in firm and steady characters.

Then the sexton and his daughter signed as witnesses.

The rector filled out a blank form, which he also signed, and caused to be signed by the two witnesses.

This he put into an envelope and handed to the bride.

Then he bowed to both, as a signal that all the forms had been complied with, and they were at liberty to depart.

"What was that paper the minister gave you, my dearest love?" whispered Craven, as they left the church.

"It was the certificate of marriage which the minister usually, and very properly, gives to the newly married woman," answered the bride.

"Oh, quite right, my angel," replied the doomed bridegroom, as he tenderly put her into the cab and took his seat beside her.

And then he clasped her to his honest heart in an ecstasy of love, and went off into the most extravagant rhapsodies about his happiness.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

◆

Evening—In Youth and Old-Age.

There are two periods in the life of man in which the evening hour is peculiarly interesting—in youth and old-age. In youth we love it for its mellow moonlight, its million of stars, its thin, rich and shooting shades, its still serenity; amid those who can commune with our loves, or twine the wreaths of friendship, while there is none to bear us witness but the heavens and the spirits that hold their endless Sabbath there—or to look into the deep bosom of creation, spread abroad like a canopy above us, and look and listen till we can see and hear the waving and melting songs of other worlds. To youth, evening is delightful; it accords with the flow of his light spirits, the fervor of his fancy, and the softness of his heart. Evening is also the delight of virtuous age; it seems an emblem of the tranquil close of busy life. Serene, placid and mild, with the impress of its Creator stamped upon it, it spreads its quiet wings over the grave, and seems to promise that all shall be peace beyond it.

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1872.

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Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York

What do You Think of My Handwriting?

A letter lies before us from a fair correspondent, in which the following passage occurs:

"That you may see how free my heart is from trouble about this man, I will ask you another question, which I suppose I would not think of if I were in love. Is my writing good?"

The writer is in error on this point. About three quarters of the letters which we receive from young ladies who are dying in love for somebody, conclude with the inquiry, "What do you think of my handwriting?" No love affair plunges a young lady so deeply into anxiety or grief, as to destroy her solicitude about her handwriting.

If we were to print all the letters which are addressed to us containing this inquiry, we should have but little room for others. The juxtaposition of the inquiry to some subject entirely foreign to it is often amusing, and sometimes very absurd.

As we cannot answer these letters in detail, we will make some general remarks which will be applicable to all of them.

The first requisite to good writing is plainness—legibility. The object of writing is to be read. The easier it is to read the better. How much the pleasure of reading is enhanced when matter is written in a clear, legible hand, every one knows.

Flourishes and ornaments are not excellences in writing. They are apt to produce obscurity, and then they become an absolute defect and detriment. This is the great objection to the hands taught by writing-masters. They are showy, and are called splendid, but they are almost illegible. A letter written in such a hand is read slowly and with difficulty. It has often seemed to us strange that there should not be writing-masters who would teach a plain, legible, common-sense hand.

Every one should take pains to write well. An idea has sometimes prevailed that an illegible handwriting was indication of greatness. This is nonsense. It is the attribute of true greatness to do everything as well as possible; and poor writing is no more a mark of superiority, than is a stuttering, stammering mode of speech.

Very many of the correspondents who address to us the inquiry about their handwriting write very well. The remark, however, may be made for all, that there is no danger of writing too well. Pains should be taken not only to acquire, but to preserve a good hand. The general views which we have presented may aid somewhat toward establishing a correct standard of excellence; and the first point toward accomplishing anything is to understand distinctly what is the object which you aim at.

The Good Men of Pennsylvania.

If we may judge by the Philadelphia papers, and by the speeches and reports made in the Legislature at Harrisburg—mind, this is not *our* opinion—the number of bad men in public life in that State must be very great. So many are proved, or at least represented by Pennsylvania politicians and editors, to be bad, that one would think there could be very few left of a different description.

An old lady once undertook to pick over some white beans for dinner. She got on very slowly. An early frost had blighted the crop, and the beans had hardly been worth harvesting that season. She found about twenty poor ones to every sound one. At length she concluded to reverse the order of her work, and pick out the good ones. These were so very few that her task was soon done.

It strikes us that the Legislature of Pennsylvania might learn wisdom from her example. Its session might be much shortened, and its labors lightened, if, instead of publishing to the world its long, black list of evildoers, it would just pick out the few good men—if there are any—holding office in the State, and inscribing their names on a roll of honor.

The Shooting of a Lawyer in His own House.

ROCHESTER, April 10.—About twelve o'clock last night a burglar entered the house of W. F. Cogswell, a prominent lawyer. Mr. Cogswell heard him and got up to drive him from the premises, and when in the front hall, at the foot of the main stairs, the burglar turned and shot Mr. Cogswell. The ball entered the right leg below the knee, perforating both bones. The burglar escaped. Surgeons are now attempting to extract the ball, and Mr. Cogswell is doing as well as can be expected. The affair causes intense excitement.

Burglary is a crime which, in its nature, must ordinarily be planned and committed with deliberation. A man who is guilty of it is wilfully bad. It is not a mere yielding to sudden temptation, but is proof of a wicked and depraved nature.

We can see no reason why a man who has broken into a dwelling-house in the night time, to steal, and who, when interrupted, deliberately shoots at another, as in the case reported in the above dispatch, should ever be permitted to go at large again, whether his shot happens to prove fatal or not.

"Thrown on My Own Resources."

We are in daily receipt of letters from all parts of the country in which the writer says, "Having been thrown on my own resources for support, I have come to the conclusion—" and then follows a statement of the writer's case, which is usually a melancholy one. According to the letters we receive, it seems that, in many cases, when people are "thrown upon their own resources," they really have no resources at all, and then find out that fact for the first time. That is to say, when brought to the test of showing and doing what they know, they discover that they in fact do not know and cannot do anything with that directness and precision which will win bread. It often happens that they cannot even write a good hand, nor spell correctly; their composition is defective; they have no practical knowledge of the commodities of trade and commerce, nor of the modes in which business of any kind is carried on: they are, in fact, utter novices in every useful respect, and have to begin life anew. This they find to be a hard matter. In truth, it *is* a hard matter.

But, what is the remedy for it? One remedy would be, for everybody to learn *some* practical thing thoroughly. If men and women who, at twenty-five, thirty or forty, find themselves thrown upon their own resources for support, could do some practical, useful thing with commendable skill, and were willing to do it in a frank and hearty way, and not with their noses stuck up in the air as though they were above honest work, they would not be apt to break through their resources when they are thrown upon them.

A cadet at West Point is drilled in all the duties and tactics of a soldier, and of all subordinate grades, as well as in those of a commanding officer, so that he may know his trade thoroughly, and be able, when thrown upon *his* resources, to meet any emergency in a practical and efficient way. The same rule and discipline should be applied in domestic and civil life. Men and women should be early and thoroughly taught to perform subordinate as well as superior functions. The ability to take right hold of practical, everyday work, and do it with celerity and thoroughness, is not only an invaluable accomplishment, but a never failing "resource."

All About a Watch Chain and Badge for a Mayor.

The Mayor of Batley, in England, thought that his august personage was an ornament to the borough, and, in turn, the borough ought to ornament his august personage. The particular ornaments which the Mayor fancied would be appropriate to him were a gold chain and badge. It was not meet, in his opinion, that his public services should go unrewarded by some such mark of esteem from his neighbors. He hinted the thing to the "General Purposes Committee"—a pretty comprehensive body, their name would seem to indicate—and the General Purposes Committee passed a resolution to suggest to the Town Council the necessity of obtaining a gold chain and badge, and recommended that the same should be purchased at a cost not exceeding one thousand dollars. Designs were invited and submitted. The one selected was a little curious. The emblems on the chain were to be as follows: "Centre, a bale of wool, or *shoddy;* on the right, a sheaf of wheat, and on the left a *fleece*."

But here an obstacle was interposed. The rate-payers, whether on account of the *shoddy* or the *fleecing*, or what not, were opposed to the present being made, so they brought the matter before the Vice-chancellor. But, on some ground or other, they were defeated, and the officer got his gold trappings, as officers get whatever they want here.

Trouble with Mexico Ahead.

Advices from the Rio Grande indicate that war may at any time be brought on between Mexico and the United States by the audacious rapacity of the Mexican chieftains in that section. As a rule, Mexicans are freebooters by nature. When a Mexican nabob becomes impoverished, he takes to robbery with alacrity. He never thinks of going honestly to work to earn his living; in his opinion, such a course would be degrading. As the African chieftain naively inquired, "Why should I go hungry so long as my sisters have children that I can eat?" so the Mexican chieftain asks, "Why should I work for my living so long as the Texans over the border have flocks and herds that I can steal?" But the Texans are not men to let their property be taken from them without resistance, and so murder is added to robbery: not only are sheep and cattle driven off, but houses are burned, and the country laid waste. It is not in human nature—certainly not in American human nature—tamely to stand such outrages. Hence retaliatory raids on Mexican soil, and a general embroilment all along the border.

The Equitable Life Assurance Association.

We are not very favorably inclined toward Life Insurance, as our readers are aware. At the same time, we are not particularly solicitous of inculcating in the minds of others our own particular views on this subject; and we appreciate the importance to those who do insure, of insuring in a safe and substantial company. Such a company we have every reason to believe is the Equitable Life Assurance Association of this city. The ALEXANDERS and other names in the directorship are a guarantee of the integrity and stability of its management. A distinguished clergyman once said to us at a dinner party that he did not believe in drinking wine; "but," said he, "if I were going to drink any I would have it good." So we may say of Life Insurance. We do not insure; but if we were to insure, we would insure with a good company.

Erastus Corning had a Little Lamb.

The Hon. ERASTUS CORNING, who died at Albany a few days ago, was a man of great wealth, and one of the most distinguished citizens of this State. The Albany *Evening Times* publishes an extended sketch of his life, from which we make the following interesting extract:

At the age of two years the child Erastus fell out of bed and injured the hip-bone, making him lame for life. Until about thirty years of age he used crutches; but his physician forbade the use of crutches, and compelled Mr. Corning to resort to a cane, and in this way the hip was so strengthened that it was only after a severe illness of a few years since that crutches were resumed.

While on his father's farm a lamb was presented to Erastus, and this gift laid the foundation of the colossal fortune of the house of Corning. When the lamb had grown to a sheep, it was sold, and the proceeds were invested in oranges, lemons, etc., which were retailed during the clerkship in Troy, and the profits, together with the slight savings from his salary, amounted, in 1814, to five hundred dollars. He then obtained a clerkship in a store. His employer at once discovered his ability, and young Corning soon became his most valuable clerk, and ultimately a partner in the concern.

WAITING FOR YOUR IDEAL LADY.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BALTIMORE, March 14th, 1872.

DEAR SIR—I would like you to answer, through the New York *Ledger*, the following question: Should a young man defer matrimony till he sees his ideal of a lady? or, in other language, should he seek an ideal of a lady for a wife? By answering the above question you will confer a great favor on a young man who has been exercised for years on this point.

When a young man is in a situation to support a wife and household he should marry. But how long he should wait in making up his mind depends on too many things to be here specified. But a few cautions may be suggested.

1. A man ought to consider what he has to give, as well as what he expects to receive. If one expects all the graces and virtues to reside in a woman—personal beauty, agreeable manners, intelligence, efficiency, prudence, good management, devoutness, affectionateness—by what right does he lay claim to the heart of such an one? What rare creature are *you*, that such a paragon should be yours? Is it modest or manly to suppose that you have only to ask to receive such a noble creature? On what grounds do you claim the alliance of a great soul in a royal form, when you yourself have no equivalent to offer? No man thinks of talking so about anything but women. What if a plain, laboring man should ask, "Shall I buy me a horse now, or wait till I meet my ideal of a horse?" Buy a horse that suits your circumstances, and is within the reach of your money.

A young clerk might ask, "Shall I buy me a cottage, or wait till I can find an ideal mansion?" But your ideal mansion is far beyond your reach, and a cottage is within it, and as you must live somewhere, you had better choose modestly. In property matters, men accommodate their ideas to their circumstances. They do not wait for ideal clothes, or houses, or business. They would laugh at the extravagance of waiting for that which was not probable, or which might not reasonably be expected to be within their reach.

But men—possibly not that sex alone—picture every imaginable excellence in the chosen one whom Time is bringing to them, and it does not seem to occur to them that it would be a shame to graft a branch from the Tree of Life itself upon a miserable crab of a stick; or to ally one a "little lower than the angels," with a plain, ungifted, ordinary mortal.

2. But there is a wiser method of selection. Let one find in his own class and on his own level one who is fairly his equal, and who will be able, without loss, to adapt herself to him and to his circumstances. Let the partnership be equal. Do not ask her to bring everything, and you nothing. If she brings health, good-nature, and industry, so must you. If she brings devotion, sacrificing love, and a gentle and complying disposition, so must you.

To marry your *ideal* woman may all be very well; but you will have to live with a *real* one. And good health, a good disposition, industrious habits and prudent management, will be more to your happiness than all the sentimental excellences in the realm of imagination.

If instead of spending hours in forming an *ideal*, and hunting for it, you would employ yourself upon yourself—making your own disposition agreeable, your manners gentle, correcting conceit and arrogance, and fitting yourself to make an honest and virtuous woman happy, it would conduce to the chances of your happiness a great deal more than by waiting for your "ideal lady."

BOYS.

Had I the planning of them, every mother's son should be in a state of torpor, like that of the claw-sucking bears in winter, at the mischievous, lawless, unlovable period, between the donning of the first short-jacket, and donning the first long-tailed coat. Then, a boy has as many legs as a centipede: go where you will, walk as gingerly as you may, one is always sure to be extended for your downfall. Then, his hair sticks out in every direction but that intended by a well-mannered head-brush. Then, his trowsers are always independent of the anatomy of his legs, and his sleeves of his elbows. His collar also is at war with his neck; and his hat, having been used oftener for a football than for its legitimate purpose, sits awry, like that of an organ-grinder's grinning monkey. Then, the heels of his shoes are trodden down on one side, and his knubby knuckles are spoiling for a fight; and his warwhoop bears no proper proportion to his age or size, being greatly in advance of both. Then, he disdains, this embryo man, door mats and clean carpets, and handles delicate articles with smudgy fingers, and bullies his little sisters, and yells "*cry-baby*" when they weep, and laps up custard and cream with the thievishness and voracity of a cat, and devours "vittles" greedily, without taking the measure of his own skin or—the appetites of others. Then, he is stone-deaf when you want him to listen, and listening when you think he is stone-deaf. Then, when you need his services, he is just going off with some "feller;" and when you have a "feller," he is as much a fixture as the parlor walls. Then he stands on street corners, and fancies it manly to endure a Spartan nausea, for the precocious cigar. Then he addresses his sister on the street after this wise, particularly if there is another boy with him: "Hallo, Suze! Won't you catch it when you get home, Miss!" Then, for all these reasons, and many others which time would fail me to mention, I could wish he would, like the bears, put his claws in his mouth, and, retiring to some distant cave, pass this embryo stage of unpleasantness in a torpor more conducive to his own self-respect and the happiness of others.

I am aware, Madam, that *your* son is a paragon, and not to be included in this category, but he is of course an exception, owing to your blessed and wise teachings; and I quite agree with you, that your neighbor's boy, John Smith, may well put on the cap I have cut out—it so well fits him. So you and I won't fall out, my dear, but will agree that there might be a patent taken out for a new style of boy generally, spite of MR. BEECHER'S championship of the present one. Pooh! who's afraid of MR. BEECHER? I used to go to school to his sister.

FANNY FERN.

A Mistaken Dream.

Gen. HUMPHREY MARSHALL, who recently died at Louisville, Kentucky, belonged to the same family with Chief-Justice JOHN MARSHALL.

A correspondent of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* gives the following account of a dream Gen. MARSHALL had just a week before his death, and which was not realized:

"In a room at the Capital Hotel, Frankfort, Lt.-Gov. Carlisle and three other friends were with the General, chatting socially, when he remarked to C., 'I had a singular and a most vivid dream last night. In my sleep a spirit appeared before me and asked me what I knew of Judge Davis, the nominee of the Labor Reform Convention. My reply was that I knew very little about him. 'Then study his record, and make yourself thoroughly master of it,' said the presence, 'for the country is on the eve of great events, with which you are to be associated. Behold!' I looked,' continued the General, 'to the part of the heavens indicated, and saw before me a political panorama, and from year to year I beheld my own name recorded until A. D. 1880 was reached, and after that it was seen no more. I shall live till 1880. John, I am satisfied of it—I shall live till 1880.'

"And in one week after the recital of his dream 'life's dream was o'er,' and a great man's career on earth was ended."

"BE GOOD TO YOURSELF."

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

"Good-bye! good-bye!" the driver said,
As the coach went off in a whirl;
(And the coachman bowed his handsome head;)
"*Be good to yourself*—my girl!"

Ah! many a fond good-bye I've heard;
From many an aching heart;
And many a friendly farewell word,
When strangers came to part;

And I've heard a thousand merry quips,
And many a senseless joke,
And many a fervent prayer from lips
That all a-tremble spoke;

And many a bit of good advice
In smooth proverbial phrase;
And many a wish—of little price—
For health and happy days;

But musing how the human soul
(Whate'er the Fates may will)
Still measures by its self-control,
Its greatest good or ill,—

Of benedictions, I protest,
'Mid many a shining pearl,
I like the merry coachman's best—
"Be good to yourself—my girl!"

THE DEAD ALIVE.

SINGULAR HISTORY OF CHARLOTTE SOPHIA, PRINCESS OF BRUNSWICK, WIFE OF ALEXIS, SON OF PETER THE GREAT.

In 1833, the late Lord Dover, a nobleman of great literary taste, and well known in the circles of diplomacy, published a statement which created considerable excitement in the different courts of Europe. Sanctioned by such high authority, it was impossible for the Russian government either to ignore the accusation, or remain silent under it. The truth of it was officially denied, as it had previously been, many years before the publication of his lordship's paper. One thing is certain, that in diplomatic and courtly society likely to be the best informed upon such matters, it was generally believed to be true.

Cox, in his history of Russia, dwells with considerable length upon the subject. So does l'Evoque, the French historian.

Voltaire, who was remarkable for anything but truth, and pensioned by the court of Russia, positively denies the story; asserts that the supposed princess was an Englishwoman of the name of Sophia Donaldson, who bore a strong resemblance to the wife of the Czarovitch. He says that she appeared at Wolfenbuttel some years after the Prince's death, and claimed to be received as his widow and sister of the reigning Duke, but was sent away, *a large sum of money being privately given to her.*

Impostors are not usually so generously treated in Germany.

St. Simon, the friend of the Regent, Duke of Orleans, in his amusing memoirs mentions the death of the Princess, which he states to have been caused by a blow from her brutal husband when in an advanced state of pregnancy.

We have quoted the above authorities to show that it is no mere effort of the writer's imagination we are about to present to our readers, but a statement founded upon facts which, however obscure, have grave authorities to support them.

Lewis Adolphus, Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, married Christina Louisa, Princess of Oëttingen, who bore him three daughters, besides several sons.

The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Charles the Sixth, Emperor of Germany, and slumbered through a peaceful life of Austrian precision and etiquette.

The second daughter, Antonetta, became the wife of Ferdinand Albert, Duke of Brunswick Bevern. Her history appears to have been quite as uneventful as that of her eldest sister.

Far less happy was the fate of Charlotte Sophia, the youngest of the three princesses, who, on the 25th day of October, 1711, became the wife of Alexis Petrowitz, eldest son of Peter the Great.

The marriage was celebrated at Torgau, in Germany, the bridegroom being in the twenty-second year of his age, the unfortunate bride several years younger.

History affords abundant evidence to prove that the Czarovitch was a man of ferocious manners. He had inherited all the violent passions of his father, but not one spark of his brilliant genius. He opposed himself bitterly to the reforms the Czar was endeavoring to introduce into Russia; allied himself closely with his aunt the Grand Duchess Sophia, who had made several attempts to dethrone and take the life of her brother; visited both the Princess and his mother, divorced for dishonoring her husband, at the convent of Isdal, to which they had been condemned.

It was a dangerous thing to tamper with the iron will of a man like Peter the Great, who, after several attempts to reclaim his son, brought him to trial, and caused him to be condemned to death; inflicting the sentence, according to some accounts, with his own hand; by others, that of Marshal Wrede, who, it is said, beheaded the Prince privately.

With this dark tragedy, however, at present we have nothing to do.

There is a law invariably observed in the imperial family of Russia, whenever a grand duke marries, the lady must conform to the Greek Church. The Princess Dagman, the sister of the Princess of Wales, twice went through the ceremony of abjuring the Lutheran faith. The first time was on the occasion of her betrothal to the elder brother of her husband, the late Czarovitch, who died at Nice. The second occasion, on her marriage with the present heir of the house of Romanoff.

The unfortunate Charlotte Sophia experienced the brutality of her husband very soon after her marriage. The circumstance took place in the palace at St. Petersburgh. The young bride, in a conversation with General Apraxin, alluded with girlish imprudence to the pains her new religious instructors had taken to explain that the Czar could not be antichrist, and the number 666 was not to be found in his name. Alexis reproached her coarsely.

On another, when the Russian custom was alluded to of Muscovite husbands chastising their wives, she incautiously permitted the word barbarians to escape her lips. The Czarovitch, who was present, started up in a fury, and struck her to his feet, exclaiming, as he dealt the unmanly blow:

"This will teach you, Madame, not to turn into ridicule the customs of this ancient nation."

The Empress Catherine, the wife of the Czar, appears to have been kind to Charlotte Sophia; her woman's heart could sympathize with her unmerited sufferings.

The imperial brute to whom her hard fortune had united her, used to exclaim bitterly: "My father married a peasant, while I have been compelled to wed a princess!"

On the birth of her son the position of the young mother was most desolate. The father of her infant never deigned to visit her, and she was left to the care of her attendants. Not a friend near her. She was not allowed to retain her child—scarcely to see him. The infant was conveyed to the apartments of the Empress. Peter would not trust his son with the possession of the heir of the throne of the Romanoffs. So great was the aversion of Alexis for the mother of his child, that he is stated to have made no less than three attempts to remove her by poison. Happily the sufferer received on each occasion such speedy succor from one of her attendants, a German, that her life was preserved.

At length, one day, when the Princess was again likely to become a mother, her husband attacked her with greater fury than ever, knocked her down, kicked her as she lay senseless upon the ground, and left her bathed in her blood. He then set forth for one of his hunting seats, without deigning to make any inquiry after his unhappy victim.

A premature confinement followed the outrage.

The unwonted sufferings of Charlotte Sophia excited the pity of her attendants, who, with the assistance of the Countess of Köningsmark, mother of the celebrated Marèchal de Saxe, resolved to deliver the Princess forever from the tyranny of her ferocious persecutor. A courier was sent after him announcing her death.

The reply of the Czarovitch was an order for her immediate interment as privately as possible, trusting by speed and secrecy to prevent the horrible treatment he had subjected his victim to from becoming publicly known.

This injunction rendered what followed comparatively easy.

The Countess of Köningsmark, who was on a visit to the court of the wife of the Czarovitch at the time, was a woman of indomitable courage, and equal to the emergency. It was by her assistance that the unhappy Princess escaped from her miserable tyrant and the gilded slavery before her. She collected for her whatever money and jewels could be found in the palace, and gave her an old and trustworthy man-servant of her own and a *femme-de-chambre* to attend her. Thus escorted, Charlotte Sophia arrived safely in Paris.

Meanwhile the funeral of the Princess took place as privately as her husband had directed, but instead of the body, a log of wood was placed in the coffin. Several of her personal attendants, trembling for the part they had taken in saving their mistress, fled to Germany for safety.

Alexis appears to have been furious at the disappearance of the jewels of his victim, and suspected they had been stolen. For a long time the diplomatic agents of Russia, at the various courts of Europe, were busily engaged in attempting to recover them. Suddenly, however, all inquiries on the subject ceased. Either the mystery was unvailed, or half suspected.

The imperial fugitive, feeling herself unsafe in Paris, where the danger of being recognized was imminent, embarked in a vessel belonging to the company of the Indies, to whom the King of France had conceded the right of colonizing Louisiana, otherwise called the Mississippi, and sailed, in company with eight hundred Germans, from l'Orient.

Even in the new world to which she had fled for shelter, Charlotte Sophia was recognized by the Chevalier D'Auban, an officer of merit, who had formerly resided at St. Petersburg, in the service of the Czar. He appears to have acted with the greatest circumspection, and kept the discovery a secret.

The faithful servant who directed the affairs of the illustrious exile, satisfied of the probity and talents of the Chevalier, proposed that they should unite their means and form a settlement on the banks of the river. The offer was accepted, and everything placed under the direction of D'Auban, who not only won the affections of the Princess by his delicate manly conduct, but, on the death of the Czarovitch, her hand.

Thus was united to a simple captain of infantry, a Princess born of a sovereign house, the sister of the Empress of Germany, and widow of the heir of one of the greatest empires in the world. Most nobly did the husband of her choice repay the confidence reposed in him by his devotion and unceasing tenderness.

A daughter was the issue of the royal lady's second marriage. She nursed the infant herself, and taught it her native German tongue.

The Chevalier D'Auban, after several years of tranquil happiness, being attacked by a disease which required the best surgical aid, sold off his property in America and set out for Paris, accompanied by his wife and daughter. Here the Princess was recognized by Marèchal Saxe, son of the woman who had preserved her and assisted her flight from Russia.

The Marèchal imparted her sad story to Louis the Fifteenth, who at once communicated with the family of the illustrious exile, who offered to receive and acknowledge her, on one condition, that she should abandon her husband and child, whom the King of France expressed himself willing to provide for.

Charlotte Sophia spurned the offer, but appears to have temporized in order to gain time. By the sale of her remaining jewels, the faithful wife and mother raised sufficient means to proceed with the objects of her affection to the Island of Bourbon, where they were permitted not only to remain unmolested, but were protected by order of the French Government.

In 1754, having lost her husband and her daughter, Madame D'Auban returned to Europe, and finally settled in Brussels, where she lived in great retirement, devoting the greater part of the pension of sixty thousand florins which the family of Brunswick made her, to works of charity and religion.

Truth, it is said, is much stranger than fiction, and we incline to the opinion. There is little doubt that the sketch we have given on the authority of unquestionably honorable names is substantially true in its main features, however imperfect in some of the minor details.

The papers left by the Countess of Köningsmark and Marèchal Saxe confirm the sad story in many important particulars.

MRS. GRUNDY.

It is sometimes awful to be a lady, and to be obliged to sit bolt upright and utter polite nothings, when you really wish to sit down upon the hearth-rug and say exactly what you think; or to be obliged to mince around the corner to cross a gutter, instead of taking the big school-girl jump of which one is quite capable; or to reply to a request to call, "I shall be delighted to do so," when you would like to say, "I don't like you; you don't like me. You ask me to call for form's sake; I shall call for form's sake: what's the use of it?"

Why must I wear things I don't find comfortable, and do what don't please me, because other ladies do so? I can't tell; but I do it, nevertheless. Certain rules are written down for me, often by people not half as upright or sensible as I am, and I must follow them, or be thought an "odd creature." No one desires to be thought odd. The beaten track is safest, and so we mince along according to pattern. Hundreds of things that we are strong enough to do we must not do, because MRS. GRUNDY would think it so funny.

The days of chivalry are gone; and we lose all the benefit that used to come from them, and yet are bound by their laws. Tradesmen do not obey your behests any more quickly because you are "lovely woman." Nobody thinks of remembering that you must be bowed down before. Men do not even give one a seat in a car, until a "crick in the knee" awakens a wish to stand, when they pretend to be suddenly stricken polite. Yet the rules and regulations continue. You mustn't do this, because you're a lady. You mustn't do that, because you are a lady. You mustn't go here or there, because you're a lady.

I beg it to be distinctly understood that I approve of the strictest propriety; that I have no "liberal views;" that I don't want to vote, nor to leave "obey" out of the marriage vows, nor to strike the marriage vows out altogether; but I should like to be as free as children are. And I think that if the world were a little better, we all might be so, and when the millennium dawns, I suppose we shall be.

AUNT POLLY

A Halter Made of Moss.

The Griffin (Florida) *Star*, speaking of the return of a visitor from California, says:

"Among the curiosities he brought from the Pacific shore was a beautiful halter made of California moss. It is extremely light and pretty, and yet is almost as strong as iron."

READING.—History makes men wise; poetry, witty; mathematics, subtle; philosophy, deep; morals, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend.

STRANGERS.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Hast forgotten one November,
Just as darkness settled down,
How the twilight found us sitting,
Strangers, in the cabin brown,

While the broken coach was mended
At the smithy near the hill?
How you sat one side the firelight,
I the other, both quite still?

With no hint or revelation
That our paths had ever crossed—
That your life had ever gathered
That which I had loved and lost.

Neither young nor beautiful,
Ladies both, this much we knew:
You looked at me kindly; idly,
Idly fell my glance on you.

Then we talked of wind and weather,
Coaches over crags upturned,
While the burning logs grew brighter,
While the coals to ashes turned.

Drifted into sad remembrance
Of the war, and what it cost;
You had stood beside its wounded
Till the soul its Jordan crossed.

In the firelight growing dimmer,
Suddenly about your head
Seemed to shine a wondrous glory,
As these tender words were said:

"Then the dying lad spoke softly:
'Tell my mother, do not weep;
Fearlessly I go, and yonder
Loving watch for her will keep.'"

"Quick! his name?" Oh, God, I thank thee!
Thou hast sent an angel down,
Clothed in quiet human robing,
Thus to lift my mourner's crown.

Yours the face my lad saw latest,
Yours the hand he held at last,
Yours the voice whose echoes lingered
Till the sounds of earth had passed.

Yet, O friend, I might have missed you,
Though our ways at twilight crossed;
Never guessed the hand before me
Penned the record of the lost.

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DESPERATE DEFENCE.

It was fortunate for young Mark Heber that the Indians resumed their attack upon the block-house at the critical moment when the destiny of his friends—his own life even—hung in the balance.

As it was, the loud alarm of the brawny savage who had sprung up in the darkness, clutching Mark's bridle rein with a grip of iron, reached only to his two fellow-sentinels, and was then drowned in the outcries and yells issuing from the fort.

Mark drew his pistol and fired. The hand upon his horse relaxed, and the Indian assailant, with a wild shriek, toppled backward and fell upon the ground. Mark struck his horse smartly and leaped the fallen figure, and dashed away into the dense darkness, taking the road to Fort McPherson.

The two remaining Indian guards, uttering screams of menace and alarm, rushed after the young fugitive—one on foot, one hastily mounted, and both firing after Mark in rapid succession.

In the thick blackness of gloom, with Mark in swift retreat, they might as well have fired upward. The chances were not one in a hundred that they should hit him.

From the moment in which he had ridden down his dead or dying savage assailant, Mark's soul had known no fear nor trepidation. Well mounted, free, surrounded by a pall of gloom that hid him from his enemies, his heart rose exultantly in his bosom, and he bent his head low and sped onward, like an arrow loosed from the bow, guided only by the deeper shadows of the trees fringing the river bank, and by the soughing and moaning of the wind among the bending branches.

His pursuers soon dropped off—the one on foot going but a few rods, the one on horseback following him two or three miles, and then turning back toward the settlement, completely outstripped and vanquished.

Then, alone upon the wide plain, Mark Heber rode for the lives of his friends and of her he loved.

"If they can only hold out until daybreak!" he prayed. "If they can only keep the savages at bay until I come with troops. God help them!"

And on he swept, a denser shadow amid the gloom, his wild eyes piercing the darkness like orbs of fire.

His Indian pursuers returned to their post, and one of them undertook the task of informing Blue Jack and the chief Yako of the escape of one of the settlers.

The rage of the outlaw and of the Sioux chief were frightful beyond description.

A brief cessation of the attack followed.

Whitman and his fellow-members of the little garrison peered out upon the excited savages, as they moved restlessly about among the shadows outlying the bonfires, and a terrible fear seized upon the settlers.

"They must have captured Heber," cried Will Whitman, in a panic. "They will burn him before our eyes perhaps."

"I see nothing of a prisoner," said the elder Whitman, peering out sharply.

Gay Heber, pale and heroic, approached one of the loop-holes and looked out, her keen young eyes fairly photographing upon her soul every feature of the scene without.

"Mark would not be taken alive," she said, in her sweet, flute-like voice, ringing out clear and full. "They have not captured him. See, their excitement is not that of joy. He has escaped! Mark has escaped!"

"I believe the girl is right," said Mr. Whitman, after a close survey of the savages. "They are not at all elated. To the contrary, they act as if they were overwhelmed with anger and apprehension."

"If they have discovered Heber's escape," said Horace Brown, "they will soon urge matters to a crisis with us. Our situation becomes all the more desperate for their discovery. We must prepare for every manifestation of savage warfare. I will go up on the roof and watch for the burning arrows."

He hurried away upon the instant.

"Will," cried Mr. Whitman, "get me the old dinner horn."

Young Whitman obeyed wonderingly.

Mr. Whitman tooted shrilly upon the useful old instrument, in imitation of the bugle blast of the herald of the party of savages.

The besiegers were suddenly silent, listening.

"Hallo, you there!" yelled Mr. Whitman, his voice ringing through the fort and commanding the enemy's attention. "You have discovered that one of our number has outwitted you all, and made his escape. I have something more to tell you. Blue Jack demanded that young Heber should be yielded up to him. It is Mark Heber who has escaped! He is now on his way to Fort McPherson for troops."

A cry of rage came from the midst of the savages.

Mr. Whitman blew again shrilly through his old dinner horn.

Again the enemy bent a listening ear.

"There's no use in your fooling around here any longer," said Whitman. "The boy you want is gone. The troops will be here in five or six hours. We are stocked with ammunition, and can hold you at bay until the arrival of the troops. The sooner you get off the better for yourselves. With the prospect of speedy relief, we are strong enough to fight double your present number."

There was a brief silence, and then the voice of Blue Jack, hoarse, yet full of volume, called out from behind one of the blazing fires:

"We will go if you will give up to me the girl known as Gay Heber. I will promise that she shall not be harmed—but I must have her. Give her up, or we'll take her!"

"Take her then!" shouted Whitman coolly. "We wouldn't give her up to you if you were her own father!"

"You force us to extremities," returned Blue Jack violently. "We do not need five hours, no, nor three, to reduce your block-house to ashes, your men to corpses, your women and children to slavery! You have said it—we'll take the girl!"

The settlers made no response.

"If we were base enough to yield up Gay Heber to this infamous scoundrel," said Hopkins, addressing his friends, "do you suppose that Blue Jack could hold back his savage allies from the slaughter? Impossible. He could not do it, any more than the lion-tamer can quell the rage of the powerful beast who has tasted blood and wants more. I tell you that Blue Jack is as treacherous as his Indian friends. If he had the girl in his power, he would revenge himself upon the rest of us for letting Heber give him the slip. Our only hope, in case of the worst, is in having the girl with us. Blue Jack has conceived some uncontrollable passion for her, it seems, and he won't risk destroying her life. I feel safer with her here than I should without her."

"I don't think that Blue Jack could kill me in cold blood," said Gay sorrowfully, "but his passion for me is that of fear and hatred. He would be glad to see me dead, I am sure."

There was no time to prolong the discussion. A shower of bullets came hurtling through the air, burying themselves in the log wall, and doing no damage. The settlers resumed the task of defence.

A brief interval of quiet followed.

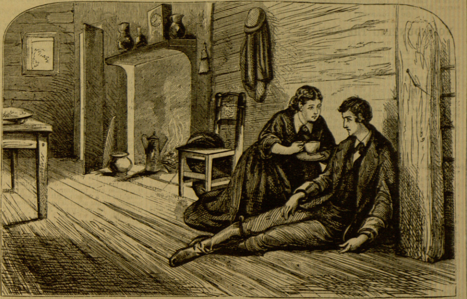
"What new mischief are they up to?" asked Whitman uneasily. "They are too quiet to please me."

A sudden lurid glow upon the eastern side of the fort answered him.

"Father," cried Will Whitman, "they've set fire to our house!"

Mr. Whitman groaned aloud.

Gay's pale face grew yet paler. A pang keener than she had felt when her own pretty home had been destroyed rent her heart. She could not bear that her friends should suffer because of her, and every sign of emotion on the part of the Whitmans were so many sources of torture to her.



MARK HEBER ON HIS RETURN FROM THE FORT.

"It is all on my account," she thought bitterly. "If I had not joined the settlement, they would all have been happy and prosperous. I am like a firebrand flung among them. At any rate, I can assist in the defence," she resolved bravely. "I will take Mark's place. I am only a weak girl, but there's no danger I will not share, no toil in which I will not bear a part."

She took up a rifle and stationed herself at one of the port-holes.

The smaller boys were still stationed upon the three unguarded sides of the fort, on the watch for every moving object, every sound other than that made by the fierce sweeping of the wind.

And thus the settlers awaited resumption of hostilities.

The Whitman house burned slowly, the logs being yet green, but after the first spasm of weakness and regret, the old farmer had not even time to sigh over his misfortune.

"We can build another," he said grimly. "I had to build two houses down in Kansas, on account of the Indians there, and the second house stands yet. I'll build another here, and that'll stand, or I'll move out of the territory—that's all."

"It seems odd," remarked Hopkins, "that the Indians attack us only upon one side of the block-house. I should think they would split up our force. They must think that there are fifteen men in our garrison. They cannot know that seven have gone off for stock."

"They'll find out soon enough," said Whitman. "I have an uneasy idea that there are savages all around us. The Indians will proceed to extremities soon, and we'll learn the worst of their deviltries."

He looked upon his burning home with regretful eyes.

Just then a low cry came from Hopkins.

"They've set fire to my house too!" he cried.

A pale creeping flame, curling upward out of his broken window-sash, and leaping out at the door-way, and flickering madly in the wind, testified to the truth of Hopkins' declaration.

The settlers watched the two slowly burning houses in a species of horrible fascination.

A moment later, Horace Brown came hurrying down the ladder from the roof, all excited and breathless.

"Our house is on fire!" he cried. "What will father say when he gets back? Our house is burning up!"

He scrambled up the ladder back to the roof, to watch the destruction of his home, and to guard the block-house against burning arrows.

Mr. Whitman dropped his rifle, and ran to the opposite side of the gallery.

"Amory's house is burning!" he shouted. "They are firing Arnold's. This is terrible!"

The remainder of the settlers looked at each other in dumb terror.

"There goes Knox's house," cried Mr. Whitman hoarsely—"and, yes, there's a red demon putting the torch to Halsey's! There are seven houses burning at once! O God! We are inclosed in a wall of fire! The awful wind brings the burning sparks direct upon the block-house. Almighty Heaven! The savages mean that the block-house shall catch fire!"

Every word spoken by the excited settler was heard even in the inner chamber where the women and children huddled together. There were a few muffled groans heard from that inner room, a stifled wail, children's low, frightened sobs, and the gasping utterances of women in prayer. But there was no loud excitement, no outcry, no running forth to embarrass the exertions or the energies of the men. Though weaker in frame, the women were not less heroic than their husbands and fathers.

The danger to the block-house was imminent.

Gay Heber ran into the inner room and dragged forth blankets and bed-quilts, one after another, tugging at burdens far beyond her strength.

Mr. Whitman hurried back to his friends and found the young girl thus at work.

"Boys," he shouted, "carry these things up to the roof. Spread the roof with them. Let Brown wet them and hang them over the sides of the block-house. And then, boys, you can go down into the lower story and draw water from the well to fill up the buckets afresh. There is work for us all now."

The boys, being those who had been deemed too young to assist in the defence of the fort, went to work with a will.

"We are in the midst of a circle of burning flame," said Mr. Whitman. "Every inch of the exterior walls of the block-house are as plainly lighted as at noonday. The savages are on every side of us. They will attack all sides at once. We must divide our forces. I will guard this side, with old Swivel. The rest of you must range yourselves, two at a side, and do the best execution possible."

"The houses are green, and will be hours in burning," said Hopkins. "See, Heber's house is not destroyed yet. It is still burning, although the roof has fallen in. The block-house is also built of green logs, and with due care on our part it need not catch fire at all. There's no use in giving up as lost yet. We can hang on—and we will."

He hurried away with his rifle and stationed himself at the northern side of the block-house, Will Whitman following him.

The others ranged themselves upon the remaining sides, and Gay Heber remained to assist Mr. Whitman.

He had not noticed her until now, but as she stood at her loop-hole, rifle in hand, her small face aglow with heroism, he felt a thrill of pity and tenderness for her, and murmured:

"Poor child! Poor child! She bears all our burdens in addition to her own. There's not a boy here braver than she! She means to bear a hand in the defence, God bless her!"

Mrs. Whitman stole out of the inner room and approached her husband.

"William," she said quietly, "if Gay Heber can assist you, I can. I know how to use a rifle. Have you a spare weapon for me?"

"There is one," said Mr. Whitman, nodding toward one in the corner.

Mrs. Whitman seized it, and examined it to see if it were loaded.

"Have you more rifles?" she asked. "Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Halsey, and indeed all the women, will aid in the defence if you can arm them."

"I can't," answered Whitman, shaking his head. "There are three or four revolvers, that is all. You have got my rifle, wife."

"And what will you do, William?"

"I have got old Swivel," was the answer. "If the savages get too near, I'll take the rifle again and fire down upon them through the holes in the flooring of this overhanging story. You'll be more needed on the other sides where the boys are."

Mrs. Whitman distributed the revolvers among three or four of the women, and marshalled them away to assist their sons.

Horace Brown, upon the roof, worked manfully. He spread out the blankets and saturated them with water. The boys filled the buckets and pails anew from the well under the block-house, and young Brown, at the risk of his life, hung wet blankets from the outside of the low stone-wall of the parapet, to protect the sides of the block-house.

The heat grew intense. The scorching flames, borne on by the wind, licked the young man's face and singed his beard. He dipped his hat in water and drew it well over his eyes, and literally fought the fire. The hot sparks showered all around him, falling dead upon the wet woolens covering the roof.

As may be supposed, this work was exhausting, and after a while Whitman relieved him, sending up his own son in his place.

For some time the Indians danced and howled about the burning settlement, exulting in its destruction, firing occasional shots at the block-house, and every moment expecting the retreat of the settlers to take fire, or the apparently doomed pioneers to announce their surrender.

But at last, to expedite matters, they fired burning arrows at the block-house from all sides, and three men, Horace Brown among them, went up to the roof to assist Will Whitman in his onerous task.

The elder Whitman kept the savages at a distance on the eastern side of the building with his swivel gun, and Gay's shots, if not effective in the sense of destroying life, were yet effective in dealing out a wholesome fear among the besiegers.

The women and boys fought with heroism, and allowed no prowling savage to approach the building upon the sides they guarded. The men on the roof, braving shots and arrows, worked like beavers.

But, oh, the horrors of that long, long night!

Shut up in a wooden building, in a very circle of blazing fires—with showers of red sparks and forked red tongues of flames shooting out upon them, borne on to them in the fury of the west wind, and threatening at each moment to devour them—with yelling savages all around them—face to face with death, and worse than death—the pioneers, men, women and children, worked and fought until death would almost have been welcome, as a release from the awful terror and horrible weariness and exhaustion.

And how the hours dragged!

"We can't hold out much longer," said Whitman, with haggard eyes. "It must be three o'clock—almost daybreak. Heber can't get help here under two hours yet, and we can't hold out until then. A break on the part of the savages at almost any moment would bring the end. And if his horse should have failed him—if he should have lost his way in the darkness—if an accident should have happened to him—"

His voice broke down, and he averted his head.

"I don't believe he could find his way to Fort McPherson in the darkness, Whitman," said Hopkins wearily, coming up to his friend. "The feat would be almost impossible. I've come to say that the ammunition is low. We have kept the savages off so far by hard fighting and constant watchfulness, but what will we do without ammunition?"

"We can only die!" said Whitman hoarsely.

Hopkins staggered back to his post.

He had told the truth in saying that the savages had been kept back from an open rush upon the fortress only by the constant shots from the loop-holes, but they had also refrained from an open attack expecting at every moment that the block-house would take fire.

There is a good proportion of cowardice in the savage nature. Indians prefer to fight from a safe ambush, to make unexpected attacks by night and in the darkness, and war cruelly upon helpless women and children, and upon unarmed settlers, but they rarely, if ever, meet their foe in broad daylight in open field, and rarely attack a foe in the face of a murderous fire.

And so, while Blue Jack urged them on to attack the block-house in a body, while he raved and swore and cursed them, telling them that the soldiers would be upon them and shoot them down where they stood unless they gained a speedy victory over the settlers and started upon the retreat to the northward, they still hung back, and practised their own manner of making war, firing shots and burning arrows, and uttering intimidating yells, confidently expecting at every moment to see the block-house burst out into flames.

The houses blazed higher and higher, and then burned with smouldering flame, the roofs falling in, and the rude walls toppling over in the heat and blaze.

At last a burning arrow fell in among the cattle. The alarm of the animals was terrible. A little dried grass that had been put in the pen for fodder took fire and flamed up. The oxen and horses crowded upon each other, and their cries mingled together.

Young Brown emptied bucket after bucket over the low wall of the block-house down into the pen, but the arrows followed in swift succession, and a faint smoke began to curl upward, testifying that the pen was on fire.

"If that blazes up, nothing can save us!" was the unspoken thought of all the settlers.

The faint smoke grew heavier, the horses and oxen reared and plunged in uncontrollable terror, and then a tiny flash of flame mingled with the smoke.

A cry of exultation came from the Indians.

A groan of horror broke from the settlers.

The conviction settled upon all that the hour of doom was come. An awful despair seized upon them.

The women gave way at last, moaning and sobbing, or growing faint. The men waited with set faces and haggard eyes for the end.

Their ammunition gone, the cattle pen burning, and the fire being beyond their power to reach it, tired and worn-out, they felt that the end was near.

It was nearer than they thought.

The faint beams of the daybreak were illumining the gray eastern sky. The houses were burning low, with a red glow that filled the little fort. The ruined settlers could do no more, and were utterly despairing. Their shots had ceased to ring out, and the savages, gaining courage as the enemy lost it, advanced in a body upon the block-house to burst in the door.

They had traversed half the distance across the square, Blue Jack and Burk with them, when a loud shrill Indian call of alarm thrilled the air, coming from the savage on guard outside the fort.

The call was repeated wildly, fiercely.

The Indians, with the white miscreants in their midst, broke in one tumultuous body for the open gates.

The settlers looked out through the loop-holes, and from the roof of the block-house, to the eastward, and beheld, not half a mile distant, and sweeping on toward the settlement at a furious speed, in the gray dawn, a company of soldiers, at whose head rode one faster than the rest, whom their instinct told them was Mark Heber.

Relief had come at last!

CHAPTER XXII.

PICKING UP AGAIN.

The joy of the besieged settlers may be imagined.

Those within the walls of the building, men, women, and children, rushed up to the roof and gazed with eager eyes to the eastward, to assure themselves that they were not the victims of an optical illusion.

And then the women kneeled down, clasping their children to their breasts, and sobbed forth their gratitude to Heaven.

Saved! Saved! The blessed word came to every lip. Saved—and from what fate!

The Indians, with Blue Jack and the ruffian Burk, continued their precipitate flight to the grove of cotton-woods just outside the stockade, and only a few rods from it. Here they mounted in hot haste, and spurred away to the northward.

The soldiers fired a volley of shots as they came on, but the rapid motion of both parties rendered the shots ineffective.

The savages did not pause to return the compliment, but fled with mad precipitancy. Their horses were fresh, while those of the troops were tired with the long and steady gallop of hours. The Indians had therefore no difficulty in effecting their escape, and the soldiers made no movement to pursue them beyond the settlement.

On reaching the great open gates of the stockade, Mark Heber dashed into the fort in advance of his companions.

What a sight was that which met his gaze!

The eight log-houses which had formed the little village upon the previous day were now mere heaps of smoking embers.

Every emigrant wagon had been burned up.

The little sheds were all gone. Desolation reigned on every side.

The dead bodies of seven Indians lay stark and stiff upon the prairie soil within the stockade.

On every hand were the signs of the awful carnage that had held riot in the fort for hours.

And to add to the general ruin, the cattle pen was burning.

Mark leaped from his nearly exhausted horse, turning him loose, and ran to the cattle pen, calling to those within the block-house to throw him down an ax.

One of the smaller boys flung him one through a trap-door in the projecting floor of the overhanging story. The men lowered a ladder, and came hurrying down with buckets of water.

Before Mark spoke a word to any one, he had extinguished the fire.

Then he held out his hand to Whitman, and said, with hollow eyes and hollow voice:

"Gay! How is she?"

"Safe and well," cried Whitman, clinging to Mark in an ecstasy of joy. "How you must have ridden, Mark! We didn't expect you for two hours yet. Thank God! You came just in time to save us."

"I stopped only to leap from one saddle into another at the fort," said Mark—"only long enough for the troops to equip themselves and mount. We have pushed on without rest. The troops will pursue the Indians as soon as their horses are refreshed."

Young Heber said nothing of his own weariness, but every bone in his body ached. He was completely worn out. His adventure of the previous day in the grove of cotton-woods among the Indians, his escape from them, his toil at the fort, his perilous flight, his long and steady ride to Fort McPherson, which had exhausted his horse, his equally hard ride home to the settlement, and all his terrible anxieties, would have broken down a man of maturer frame than Mark Heber. He moved toward the ladder, staggered, and leaned against the log wall of the block-house, pale as death.

Whitman and others of the settlers, after greeting Heber, hastened forward to speak to the officers of the troops.

Gay Heber sprang lightly down the ladder and flew to Mark with a cry of joy. He clasped her in his arms in silence, in a rapture too great for words.

"My poor dear boy!" said Gay at last, in a sort of yearning pity and tenderness. "You are just tired out. Come up into the block-house with me, and I will take care of you."

The women and children were swarming down the ladder, and the young pair waited until all had descended. Then they crept up into the upper story of the block-house, and Gay spread dry blankets and pillows upon the floor of the gallery, and Mark flung himself down wearily.

Then Gay, without a word, hurried into the inner room, which, as the reader knows, was a room within a room, and lighted from the surrounding gallery, as we have termed the outer chamber. The chimney ran up through the centre of the building, and there was a broad hearth in the inner room, upon which a fire was burning. Gay hastened to make a pot of coffee, and to broil a portion of antelope steak upon the coals. She brought these, with bread, to her foster-brother.

"I am too tired to eat," said Mark.

"Drink the coffee at least," urged Gay. "It will strengthen you, Mark."

The youth allowed himself to be persuaded, and, his appetite coming to him, he ate a liberal allowance of breakfast, Gay ministering to him in a motherly fashion the while, selecting for him the choicest bits of meat, and forbidding him, with a wise shake of her small dusky head, to speak until he should have finished his meal.

Under this affectionate discipline, Mark forbore to ask any questions until he had amply satisfied Gay's expectations in the matter of appetite. Then he asked many questions concerning what had occurred at the fort during his absence, and Gay answered him. Presently, yielding to the languor of fatigue, Mark lapsed into slumber.

Gay gently arose and refilled her coffee-pot, and carried it down the ladder, offering the officers a portion of it in tin cups. Her attention was gratefully accepted, and the women of the fort hastened to prepare a generous breakfast, which was shared by officers, soldiers, and settlers alike, in the open air, sitting upon the ground in the mingled light of the rising sun and the smouldering ruins of the houses.

Soon after breakfast the soldiers remounted and rode away upon the trail of the Indians.

The first act of the weary settlers was to examine the stockade. With the exception of some damage caused by the swivel gun, it was intact. A few hours' work would restore it to its pristine strength.

The next act was to drag the bodies of the seven dead Indians outside the stockade, and to give them decent burial, with the body of the savage Mark Heber had killed while escaping, on his way to Fort McPherson. They were interred in a trench in the grove.

The settlers, returning to the stockade, proceeded to repair the breach in the wall, after which they secured the gates, cared for their stock, turning it loose, and appointing a guard, who was stationed on the roof of the block-house, they lay down on the ground to rest.

For some hours a silence like that of death brooded over the ruined settlement.

In the afternoon the settlers were astir, however, and with their awakening from refreshing slumber, hope, courage and energy came back to them.

Mark Heber came down from the block-house with Gay: he calm and hopeful, with a keen, brave look in his blue eyes; she blithe and gay, as in the days when she had been the sunshine of the fort.

"Well," said Mark, looking around upon the begrimed faces of his friends, "all is not lost, since not a life is missing. No one can boast of even a wound."

"No, nothing is lost except our houses and some furniture," cried Whitman heartily. "The grove still stands. We have our axes, and our good right arms to wield them. Our village will arise from its ashes like the fabled Phœnix. Our furniture can be replaced with some make-shift. But our wagons will prove a serious loss, which we can bear patiently, reflecting how much worse it might have been."

This was the spirit that animated the settlers.

"'Most everybody that settles out so far as this has some such trouble in commencing," said Hopkins. "So long as we are all safe, I feel to rejoice and praise God. I hope the troops 'll overtake the savages and kill every soul of 'em. I'm a peaceable man, but I confess I'd like to see that head lieutenant come back with the scalps of a dozen savages, besides those of Blue Jack and Burk, hanging from his belt. But the question is, Heber, how are the troops to overtake the savages, with their fresh horses?"

"They will pursue them to their own country," said Mark. "They will not overtake them to-day nor to-morrow, but they will keep steadily upon the trail, and give the savages a good scare, and perhaps battle. We sha'n't see the troops again in a week."

"It's too late to go to work to-day," said Whitman, his thoughts reverting to the condition of the settlement, "but to-morrow we'll make considerable progress. We have a number of logs felled, both in the fort and in the grove, and to-morrow we'll go to building again. This is a little check on us at the outset, but I, for one, go for sticking by the settlement. This trouble with the Indians and Blue Jack is already past, and I don't think they'll attack us again after the scare the soldiers will give them. The climate is lovely; the situation of our town is perfect; we have water at our doors; a great city will stand on this very spot some day; and we are near Fort McPherson, on the route of travel, and can almost shoot game from the walls of the stockade. Who wants to abandon the settlement?"

No one did. Even the women voted to remain.

Mark Heber took Mr. Whitman aside at nightfall, and asked him, in his straightforward manner:

"Mr. Whitman, do you not think Gay and I ought to leave the settlement? We have brought a great deal of trouble upon you, and we may bring more—"

"I'll risk it," said Whitman. "I tell you, lad, you are not going to hear any more of Blue Jack, or if you do, he will not again attack the fort. The troops will frighten his cowardly red-skins out of this section of the country."

Mark shook his head.

"I know that Blue Jack will attempt to gain possession of Gay," he said. "I feel that he will. I know it. Now, do you want us to stay?"

"Yes. The savages cannot return under some weeks, and then our men will be at home. I want you to stay, Mark. God will not suffer you or Gay to meet with further harm from that ruthless miscreant. I will not believe it. Suppose you go from us? You are impoverished; you have no wagon in which to transport your effects; you can only go on foot eastward or westward to some town where you must encounter poverty and friendlessness. Say no more about going. You have united your fate to ours, and we have united our fate to yours. Let us cling together."

Mark gladly consented to remain.

A guard was posted on the stockade and upon the roof of the block-house during the night that followed. The women and children slept in the log fortress. The men, their arms at their side, slept in the open air, wrapped in their blankets.

No alarm occurred during the night.

The following morning the settlers went to work zealously. The debris of the houses was removed, and a new house was begun. In two days it was finished, and Mr. Whitman had taken possession of it, he being the eldest of the settlers, and the right to the first house being generally acceded to him.

A second house was built, and this was occupied by the Hopkins family. Both houses stood upon the sites of the former ones, and precisely resembled them, even to the details of construction.

All the trees already felled had now been used, and the sound of wood-chopping filled the air during the three following days.

A third house was in course of erection, upon the site of the Halsey house, when the soldiers returned from their expedition unsuccessful, except in having driven away the Indians.

"You won't be troubled with the savages again," said the chief lieutenant, addressing Mr. Whitman and Mark Heber. "They have marched back to their reservation. We have no orders to be absent from the fort over a week, unless such absence is imperative, and it could do no good to go up to the Sioux reservation and engage in a fight with twenty times our number. The government will see to these fellows for you. Meanwhile, don't abandon your settlement. That would be folly. Any day when you need help, send for us. Your little fort is well gotten up. With a half-dozen more men to garrison it, you can defy any force of savages you are likely to encounter."

This address confirmed—if it had needed confirming—the resolution of the settlers not to abandon their village.

The soldiers remained over night at the settlement, and the next morning went on to Fort McPherson.

The pioneers proceeded with their task of rebuilding their houses, working early and late with unfailing energy.

At the end of twelve days after the destruction of the settlement, the new houses, eight in number, built of heavy logs, were finished. Mark Heber's house, by Gay's wish, was built last of all. And on the night of the twelfth day after the conflagration, the eight families were each domiciled under its own roof.

During the progress of the building several wagon trains had passed, halting at Heber at midday. None had stopped over night.

The new home of Gay and Mark had no dainty wall-hangings, but Gay had carried all her furniture covers into the block-house, and now produced them, using them to cover a new lounge and new boxes constructed after a primitive fashion by the ready hands of the younger boys, many of whom had been pressed into the service of the men and made to work in good earnest, a promotion that caused them to feel that they also were men.

Upon the thirteenth day after the conflagration, the seven men who had gone into Colorado for stock, arrived at the settlement at noon, in company with a wagon train bound east.

They had been successful in their mission, and had brought home cows, horses, sheep, and other stock.

They were received with great rejoicing.

Mark Heber's venture of money had brought him a good horse and second-hand saddle, sheep and cattle—far more than he had expected. He felt himself a rich man as he contemplated his new possessions.

The returning settlers had brought home also another acquisition, which they might have regarded less favorably if they had known him better.

This was a half-breed lad, a cripple, whom they had found at one of the stations on the route, and who had done one of the party a service, which was requited by offering him a home at Heber.

The young fellow—he was not more than fifteen—was a mild-eyed, mild-faced lad, with the apparent gentleness of a girl. His history, as he had given it to the settlers, was simple. He had told them that he was the son of a white hunter by his Indian wife, and that he was now an orphan. He was well known at the station where the settlers had picked him up, and was praised by the honest rancher in whose house he had been found as being honest and trustworthy, a sort of "tame cat," valuable in many ways, accustomed to act as a herder, and knowing nothing whatever of savages and their customs, his mother having died early.

With some pride, Mr. Halsey introduced the girl-faced half-breed lad as his protégé, and the white children took to the boy ot once.

Mr. Whitman questioned the young half-breed closely, and was also pleased with him.

"He can stay," he said. "He will serve as a herder. He says he can hunt. He can teach our boys to trap and shoot game. Let him stay."

The wagon train went on without him.

The boy, who had given his name as Lemuel, or Lem., was a little shy at first, his eyes watching every young girl with a singular pertinacity. At last his gaze concentrated itself upon Gay Heber, and a bright light shot up into his black eyes.

"Who is that lady?" he asked one of the Halsey children, in a furtive manner.

"That's Gay Heber," was the answer.

The half-breed lad drew a long breath, and crept nearer to Gay. And from that moment, during the remainder of the day, he followed her around like a "tame cat" indeed, watching her with strange intentness. Before nightfall the settlers began to jest with Gay about her new admirer.

"The half-breed is to lodge with us, Gay," said Mark, with a smile. "Our family is the smallest, and Mr. Halsey begged me to take him. You are willing, are you not?"

Gay, looking up, encountered the strange glance of the half-breed, and she shuddered in spite of herself as she answered:

"I suppose so, Mark. But somehow I don't like the boy. As Scotch people say, there's something uncanny about him. I am afraid of him!"

And the feeling grew upon Gay, despite her efforts to shake it off. She *was* afraid of the smiling, mild-faced lad, and she murmured:

"I cannot help it, Mark—the boy seems to me 'a snake in the grass!' I feel that he will work me some evil. Can he be another emissary of Blue Jack?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

NOT COUNTING THE COST.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

Standing on the marble porch of an elegant mansion on —— Avenue were a youth and maiden. He was about bidding good-bye, seemingly. Her hand was clasped in his, and retained a moment longer than she thought was necessary. Drawing it away, she said:

"There, Julian, I cannot stop here longer. I've only half an hour to dress for dinner; and your time must be precious too. Uncle will expect you back before he leaves his counting-room."

"A moment more, Fay. Tell me; will you give me that picture of yours I've begged for so often? Do, do, Fay! If you only knew how I would prize it, I think you would."

He looked so handsome, and pleaded so earnestly, it was wonderful how Fay Mandeville could refuse him. But she was a very thoughtful and wise little girl for her years, only just sixteen.

"Nay, Julian, I cannot. You know uncle would not approve of that. You have heard him express his opinion about a young lady's 'promiscuously distributing her face around,' as he says."

"Promiscuously! Thank you, Miss Mandeville. I had flattered myself with a hope I was—"

A coming step arrested his words. Immediately after a young man ascended the steps, and stood beside them.

What a contrast between the two youths! The one fashionable, elegantly dressed, conceited, and supercilious in manner certainly, just at that moment, when he gazed on the "very poorly clad and humble looking individual," as he considered him.

But when the hat was raised from the broad, noble brow, and the youth addressed Miss Mandeville, Julian La Forge had reason to change his idea, and he muttered to himself:

"That pauper has the air of a prince!"

Perhaps there was just visible an increase of color in the young man's face, as he asked:

"Where shall I deposit my bundle, Miss Mandeville?"

"If you will not walk in and see mamma, I will take it," Fay answered, putting forth her hands to receive the parcel.

"Thank you. No; I will place it on the hall table, Miss Mandeville," the youth replied; and in a gentle, dignified manner, stepped into the hall, deposited his bundle, returning gracefully, raised his hat entirely from his head, and was gone.

"Humph! And who may that pauper of princely mien be?" asked Julian.

"For shame, Julian! Although you do not intend it, you are doing William Manly something like justice by your words. He *is* a noble youth."

"I suppose he is not one of your promiscuous acquaintances, but a—"

"There! Good-afternoon, Julian. I have neither the time nor mood for a war of words."

And turning away, Fay went in, and her lover off, vowing vengeance against William Manly—for what he could not just tell, except that Fay had received him kindly.

Julian La Forge loved pretty Fay as well as he could love anybody, and she rather liked him; at any rate, she liked no one better.

He was declared "perfectly charming" by all the girls of Fay's acquaintance, and somehow she had begun to think she ought to try to love a little, one who loved her so well. Julian was a very intelligent and smart youth, and, young though he was, held the position of book-keeper in the large establishment of Fairwell & Co.

Julian had managed, for a time, to gain wonderfully in old Mr. Fairwell's—Fay's uncle—opinion; but lately some traits in his character manifesting themselves, caused the old gentleman to watch Julian more closely, and with a suspicious eye. So, when the growing intimacy between him and Fay came to his knowledge, he determined to end it—if possible, without doing any injustice to the young man. He could not discharge him without a good cause. Then came the idea of sending Fay away to school. But when, in conference with her mother on the subject, the wise parent said:

"It will make matters worse. Away from our influence, with the idea of harsh treatment in her mind, *he* could have a better chance of winning her. We could not prevent his writing to her. Let her be, and trust to her good sense for the result."

So it was determined. And a very short time after proved it a wise decision.

The next evening, when they met again, Fay made no allusion to Julian's ill-temper the afternoon previous. But he did not wish to drop the subject, and when they were alone he asked:

"Now, Fay, will you tell me why you thought it necessary to treat that porter fellow with so much courtesy, and where you had the honor of forming his acquaintance?"

"Although not acknowledging your right to question me, I will answer. My manner to William Manly is the result of his own worthiness. He is not a porter, although that position would not change my respect. I should honor him in his endeavors to win a support for his mother and himself.

"I met him at his own home. His mother is mamma's dress-maker, and we think her rich in the possession of so good a son," Fay said, looking into her companion's face with an expression which said as plain as words, "Would there were more like him."

"Ah, indeed. I wonder, possessing such an exalted opinion of him, you do not seek to solicit for him your uncle's favor. Perhaps we might find a place for him. I think we need another runner boy," Julian said, a sneering expression disfiguring his face.

"Thank you. I believe mamma has spoken, or intends speaking, to uncle on the subject. But young Manly *may* possibly fill another and more responsible position. Excuse me; I will go into the music room. I think it will be more agreeable than here," Fay said, moving off.

Julian ground his teeth and vowed to "fix that presuming fool," as he called William Manly. The remainder of the evening he spent flirting desperately with an "old flame," and grew every hour more wrathy when he saw how little Fay cared, and how happy she seemed with the party around the piano.

Fay Mandeville's eyes were opened that night, both with regard to Julian's unworthiness and her own feelings. She knew her heart was very slightly affected, and resolved to let Julian know it without further delay.

Returning home, Julian apologized for his ill-humor and rudeness, saying:

"Forgive me, Fay; but I feel anything but pleasantly toward that young fellow, for you remember he interrupted me at a very important moment. I was begging for your picture."

"Certainly, Julian, I forgive you."

"And for my desertion this evening? Miss Tracy is a very old friend whom I have not seen for a long time. She had so much to say of old times."

"Oh, that is nothing for me to forgive. Eleanore Tracy is a lovely girl, and I hope you may be so fortunate as to win something more than a friendly regard from her. You have my best wishes for your happiness—"

"Fay, what do you mean?" Julian exclaimed, interrupting her.

"That I shall always be glad to return your friendship, Julian."

"And nothing more."

"Nothing more, Julian."

They had reached her home. He would have said more, much more, which he hoped would change her mood, but the door opened, and her uncle stood before them.

"Good-night!" without even her hand extended. And she was gone from his sight!

Julian related the whole affair to a friend the next day, and likewise his plan to "fix the fellow."

"Better not attempt it, Jule. It is a dangerous game. If you should be caught, it would cost you dearly," said the young man.

"I will do it! It is impossible being discovered," answered Julian.

"Very well. I'll have nothing to do with it," returned his friend.

The next day a sweet, gentle little woman sat sewing beside the window, watching and waiting for her son's coming. Smiling, she said:

"Oh, I wish he would come. How surprised and delighted he will be! My dear, good boy! I had scarcely dared hope for such speedy good luck, although Mrs. Mandeville promised to speak for him. Ah, here he comes!"

Another moment, and Mrs. Manly's arms were around her son. And she pushed into his hand the letter which had given her so much joy. Quickly opening it, William read:

"MY YOUNG FRIEND: If you will present yourself as soon as convenient after the receipt of this, to Mr. Fairwell, he will find some position for you in his establishment.

"Very truly, F. MANDEVILLE."

"Oh, how kind! And are we not two of the happiest people living to-night, little mother? Really I feel like shouting with joy!" the good son said, as he caught his mother within his arms, and danced her round the room. And when almost out of breath he placed her in her chair, sank on a stool at her feet, and said:

"No more working those dear little fingers almost off, nor blinding your eyes with sewing until midnight. No, indeed. I intend your eyes shall grow bright again. O mother, I feel as if I was too happy for it to last. But now we must work a little, brushing and darning my coat. Faithful old companion, I will put you on the retired list before long."

And so the happy youth worked and talked until his mother sent him, with kisses and blessings, to bed.

The next morning William Manly presented himself at Fairwell & Co.'s. The old gentleman had not reached the store. William felt somewhat embarrassed while waiting his coming, as no civility was tendered him by any one about.

At length—an age to him—Mr. Fairwell came. William approached him, saying:

"I am William Manly, sir."

The old gentleman was rather brusque always, and that morning he was decidedly cross. Some young scamp had played him an April trick, and he was not feeling any the better for it. So in reply he said to poor William:

"Well, sir, what is that to me?"

A half-suppressed titter was heard, and William hastened to say:

"I am here, sir, to thank you for your kindness, and in answer to the message for me to present myself to you."

"What in thunder are you talking about? I don't know anything about it."

Mortified and dreadfully disappointed, William asked:

"Did you not send for me, sir?"

"No, sir," snapped the old man.

"Then there is some mistake. Excuse me, sir," William said, and withdrew.

How he reached home he scarcely knew, and with his head pillowed on his mother's shoulder, he told of his reception.

"Why did you not show him the note?" she asked:

"Because I knew not from which it came, Miss or Mrs. Mandeville. It was only signed by the initial F for the first name. I thought possibly the young lady might, thinking to win from her uncle a favorable reception of me, have anticipated it by sending the note, and something afterward had driven it from her mind," William answered.

When Mr. Fairwell returned to dinner that day he told of the strange action of young Manly, and inquired if his sister, Mrs. Mandeville, understood what it meant. She did not. But a very grave look came over Fay's bright face, and she said:

"Uncle, I believe I have a clue to it. But until I am better assured, I would rather not tell my thoughts. When you come home to tea I shall know more."

Fay told her mother something about it, and an hour after they were on their way to Mrs. Manly's. Without hesitation they explained the object of their visit immediately on their arrival. The poor little woman, with traces of tears still on her face, handed them the letter which had brought so much joy, and resulted in such deep mortification.

Fay nodded her head as she read. Turning to Mrs. Manly, and placing her finger on the paper, she remarked:

"You see the date, April 1st. It is as I thought. Do not feel so badly, Mrs. Manly. I trust this will end to our perfect satisfaction. This I beg leave to retain."

That evening Fay placed the forged letter in her uncle's hand. After looking at it very intently for a few moments, he drew from his pocket-book a little slip of paper, which placing near, he compared with it, and said:

"Just so. I believe we are both on the same track, Fay, and the right one too. Now tell me what you think."

Fay did as he desired, and after hearing her, he replied:

"Yes; it is just so. This slip of paper I found between the leaves of the ledger. You see, on it is written the same words as the first line of this note. Well, I must make some atonement to the young man for my ill-humor this morning.

And sitting down, the old gentleman wrote to William Manly, offering him a position in his establishment, and inclosing a check for a month's pay in advance. This was immediately sent to the young man.

The next morning Mr. Fairwell, in the presence of those clerks who had witnessed William Manly's discomfiture the day before, said:

"As I am somewhat responsible for what is done here, I feel it my duty, as well as pleasure, to make good a promise written by one of the gentlemen here to Mr. Manly. As Mr. La Forge is contemplating just now resigning his position, I think, it will from this day be filled by Mr. Manly, as I know none other for which he is so well suited."

Scarcely had he ceased speaking when young Manly, plainly but well dressed, entered.

And soon after Julian La Forge managed to get away, without any one knowing just when. Few, if any, regrets followed him; all felt he well merited the severe lesson he had received.

Two years have passed since then. Daily William Manly is gaining in favor with his employer. Julian sees him not only occupying *his* position in the establishment of Fairwell & Co., but hears rumors of his winning another position to which he had aspired. Yes, everywhere he hears that it is likely, before many months more, that William Manly will be connected by a nearer and dearer tie, to Mr. Fairwell. He believes this, for he met Fay a few days ago leaning on his arm, looking into William's face as she never had into *his*; and he cursed the day that he played that April trick.

IT IS ONLY TOO TRUE.—A man who shows any desire to do good is at once made a pack-horse; and those who cannot use him, call him a hypocrite.

MYRA'S LESSON.

BY ANNA SHEILDS.

Myra was pouting. The unmistakable expression of ill-temper disfigured her pretty face, and Earnest sighed as he remembered how often it had been there during their brief married experience. Upon the breakfast table were standing the dishes of a substantial meal, in the disorder that follows their use. Breakfast was over, but Earnest still kept his seat, toying absently with a teaspoon, while Myra looked at him with the cross look of a thwarted child.

"Then you won't give me the dress?" she said.

"I can't, Myra. I really could not do it without running into debt."

"That's just an excuse. Papa always gave me the money for my clothes, even if he was cross about some other things."

"Your father was a rich man, Myra, when we were married."

"I wish he was rich now. I'd ask him for the money. I never thought you would be stingy, Earnest."

This last thrust was too much for the long enduring temper. Earnest Mather's voice was very stern as he answered:

"I am not stingy, Myra. You knew that I was a poor man when you married me, and that I could not give you the luxuries of your old home; but I have granted you every indulgence in my power, without getting into debt. That I will not do, for your sake as well as mine."

He left her then, lingering in the hall as he put on his overcoat, hoping she would come for a kiss, and word of reconciliation. But she sat tapping her little foot upon the floor until the hall door closed, and then ran to her room for a crying spell.

She was a spoiled child, the only daughter of a man who had been very wealthy, but who had hazarded his money in an unfortunate speculation and lost it. A position abroad was offered him, which he accepted, sailing with his wife for Europe soon after Myra's marriage, congratulating himself that the house and furniture he had given his daughter for a wedding gift were settled upon herself, and not affected by his change of fortune. He knew Earnest Mathers to be an honorable man, who had a good business capacity, and a high place in the esteem and confidence of his employers, and he felt no anxiety about Myra's future.

So the little wife, as she made her pretty blue eyes all red with tears of temper, had no sensible mother to tell her how wrongly she was acting, no sister to sympathize with her, no one to scold or humor her.

Under these circumstances the tears were soon dried, and Mrs. Mathers concluded to go out for a long walk.

"It's no harm to look at the dress again, even if I can't buy it," she said, as she tied on a coquettish little bonnet, and otherwise beautified herself for her expedition.

The day was bright, a soft warm morning in early spring, and the stores were filled with tempting finery. In Myra's dainty portmonnaie there were crisp bills enough to purchase a number of nice little parcels, even though the price of the expensive dress she wanted was denied her. So the morning slipped away, and luncheon time found her chatting with Julia Manvell in an up-town restaurant, and quite willing to accompany that friend upon a second tour of stores in the afternoon. It was after five o'clock when the little matron, "tired to death," as she said, reached her pretty home.

Her first shock was catching a glimpse of Earnest's maiden aunt, Miss Cordelia Lowry, her especial aversion and dread, seated upon the drawing-room sofa, with a most decided "come to stay" attitude.

"Old horror!" she muttered. "I wish she was at home. I want to make up with Earnest. I don't like the dress half as much as I did yesterday."

The second shock met her upon opening the door of her bedroom. Open boxes, closets, drawers, an air of general confusion everywhere, and the small trunk Earnest always took upon his short business trips missing altogether. Clearly her husband had packed up and gone, leaving Aunt Cordelia, as usual, to keep Myra company. But where was he?

Upon the dressing-table was a note directed to herself, and Mrs. Mathers tore it open. No loving address to herself; merely this:

"I have waited for your return as long as possible, and write this to explain my absence. I told you six months ago of Mr. Agnew's offer to me, if I would accept the position of traveller to the house—double my present salary, and a liberal commission for all sales. I declined it then, because you said the money would never compensate you for the constant separation. To-day the offer is renewed. After our conversation this morning, I think your old objection will hardly have any weight; so I have accepted, and leave the city in an hour. I will write you every month, inclosing remittances. I leave the accompanying bank-note for the dress you desire. I have sent for Aunt Cordelia, as usual, to stay with you.

"EARNEST MATHERS."

Not a loving word, not a regret for the long separation! Myra was stunned. She realized then how considerate and loving her husband had been, under the wearing vexations of her whims and caprices. Great tears rolled down her cheeks, as she bitterly reproached herself.

"I have made him believe I don't care for anything but money," she thought. "He leaves me this to console me for his absence. Oh, Earnest, come home again, and I'll wear a shilling calico and a sun-bonnet to church, before I'll tease you for finery again!"

It was not an easy task to go to dinner and meet Aunt Cordelia, but it must be done. It was no new thing for that worthy, sharp-nosed spinster to see Myra in tears, when Earnest was away on business; so she only sniffed, and expressed a desire to see "any man alive *she'd* cry for," and said no more about the little wife's red eyes.

The days passed very wearily. Aunt Cordelia was "pious good," and preached daily sermons to Myra about extravagance and various other feminine weaknesses, till the poor little woman wished she was as homely and ill-clad as the tormentor herself.

"You never see me with such a dress in the house as that!" the spinster would say, with a complacent glance at her hideous dyed skirts.

"I buy my clothes to wear," Myra retorted. "If I had as much money as you, Aunt Cordelia, I'd be ashamed to go round the house in such dresses."

And the spinster would shake her head and groan, audibly pitying "poor dear Earnest."

"You never see me," was ever her opening address, and Myra grew to hate the words, in the long months of her enforced companionship.

For Earnest did not return. Spring, summer, fall passed away, and December was opening, yet still he did not come. Every month a formal letter reached Myra, inclosing a draft for her expenses of such liberal value as proved Earnest was making money; but each one informed her that her husband was just leaving the city from which he wrote, and made no mention of his next destination. Heart-sick, penitent, and oh! so lonely, the little wife spent only what was necessary for the house, and fairly loathed the sight of the money accumulating in her hands. Letter after letter she wrote and destroyed, not knowing where to direct them. She was growing pale and worn, so quiet and subdued that Aunt Cordelia's most hateful speeches went often unanswered.

She was sitting in the drawing-room one cold December morning, when Mr. Agnew, Earnest's employer, came in.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Mrs. Mathers," he said; "but I wished to inquire if you have heard from Earnest this week."

"Not since the first," she replied.

"He wrote us on the fifth, that he would remain in Cincinnati until the first of the year, and was to send some papers on the seventh. These have not come, and we are embarrassed for want of them. I telegraphed to the Spencer House yesterday, but have no reply. However, if you have not heard he is ill, he is probably better."

"Ill!" she faltered.

"Well, I judged from his last that he had not fully recovered from the fever he had in Pittsburg, although he resumed business. If you hear to-day, will you be kind enough to send us word?"

"Certainly," Myra managed to gasp, in a choked voice, and Mr. Agnew left.

"Ill! A fever in Pittsburg! Sick at a hotel, and she not near! Earnest, her Earnest!" All the love in the little woman's heart rose in protest. She astonished Aunt Cordelia by dashing into that lady's room, crying:

"Take care of the house. I'm going to Cincinnati," and dashing out again as abruptly.

The way the trunk was packed was a caution to travellers. Myra never knew what went into it: collars, books, underclothes, walking suits, all pitched in pellmell in utter confusion. How she hugged and kissed her hoard of money; how carefully she put it in the bosom of her dress; how she cried and laughed, and acted generally like a young lunatic, Aunt Cordelia may be able to describe, but I cannot. Afternoon found her seated in a Western express train, rushing to Earnest as fast as steam could carry her.

Aunt Cordelia declared it took her twenty-four hours to get the whirl of that preparation out of her head; but she managed to survive, and lead the servants left in her care such a life that they gave warning in two days, and were replaced seven times during her reign.

In a wide, pleasant room in the Spencer House, Earnest Mathers lay upon his bed dangerously ill. He had been for months trying to quiet his sick, restless heart by overworking his body, keeping such business hours, such stress and labor in his work, that the firm at home never ceased congratulating themselves upon their choice of a traveller. He made money fast, supplying Myra with a generous hand, and yet saving considerable. For what? Bitterly he thought that when he was a very rich man he would go home again, and try to make Myra contented. He tried to fancy he had ceased to love her, but the unceasing craving of his heart for the sight of her face and the sound of her voice contradicted this. Work, work, work! That was the medicine for his mental pain, till the overwrought brain gave way, the overtasked body succumbed, and he lay ill with fever in Pittsburg for two weeks. Up again before his strength was half restored, and now the relapse had prostrated him in Cincinnati, and he lay suffering and apparently dying, too ill to send for Myra, too ill to give directions, too ill to do any more than lie helpless at the mercy of hired hands.

The long night was passing, and a cold grey dawn announcing another wintry day, when the omnibus drove up to the door of the hotel, and in a dim, confused way Ernest heard the bustle of the newly arrived travellers. He was vaguely wondering if any friend would recognize his name on the register, and come to him, when the door of his room opened very softly, and he heard the waiter say:

"Mr. Mathers is here."

A soft little rustle followed, and then two cool hands fell upon his hot forehead, tears and kisses followed, and Myra was sobbing:

"Oh, Earnest, darling! Thank God I have found you! Oh, dear, forgive me!"

He was too sick to talk much, but he made his wife fully understand his forgiveness, and then sank off to sleep in the sweet consciousness that love had come to him, a nurse and comforter.

It was a long, tedious illness, but in the years that followed it, Earnest and Myra looked back upon it as the beginning of their true happiness. Doubts and repinings were swept away in the danger of a separation in the grave, and all Myra's penitence went into such entire, self-sacrificing devotion, as snatched her husband from the very jaws of death, to be her own again.

Aunt Cordelia says that she never could understand why Earnest Mathers flew off travelling in such a hurry, or why Myra rushed to Cincinnati without any comb and brush, as she found afterward; but if you do want to see human turtle-doves, those Mathers are enough to last you a lifetime.

TESTING AN ATTORNEY.

Old Goldpeck was a queer genius. He was called "old" not so much on account of his years as for a matter of distinction. It was rather a title of veneration. Goldpeck was worth a million of dollars; and he had made his fortune honestly—had made it in reclaiming and developing, and giving to his fellows, a large tract of land which had been wild and useless until he took hold of it. At length Goldpeck bought a grand estate in Flushborough, and thither he removed with his household gods. He was comparatively a stranger in Flushborough, but he had chosen that place for his residence because it was convenient to the Grand Summit Railroad, of which he had assumed the direction, and which he mostly owned.

There were several lawyers in Flushborough, and Junius B. Bumpwell was one of them. And Junius B. B. flattered himself that he was at the top round in the ladder of legal lore. One day Junius B. B. sat in his office, engaged in writing. A man entered, hat in hand, and asked if 'Squire Bumpwell was in. Junius looked up, and frowned. He beheld a middle-aged man, clad in the garb of a day-laborer,—evidently one of the dirt-diggers of the railroad. His boots were heavy and mud-covered; his slouchy overalls were coarse and patched; and, altogether, he looked poor and forlorn enough. Junius acknowledged that he was Mr. Bumpwell.

"Well, 'Squire, I'm in a heap o' trouble; and I want a bit of your advice," said the visitor, in a broad, homely way, but respectfully.

Junius B. B. was busy, and he wanted no such client. He did not seem inclined to recognize the "man and brother" in the mud-sill's garb. With an impatient gesture, and with a palpable show of disgust, he waved his dainty hand toward the door, and informed his would-be client that Sam. Smiler would be more likely to attend to his case than anybody else. He would find Smiler's office in a little back room over Snapper's store.

The man bowed, and put on his battered hat, and left.

Shortly thereafter one of Bumpwell's chums came in, and after a jolly salutation he broke out,—

"Say, Junius,—isn't Goldpeck a queer old chap? What did he want with you?"

"Want with me? I haven't seen him. I don't know him."

"Why,—bless your soul, man! didn't I see him come out of your office not five minutes ago?"

"Eh?—What?—Old Goldpeck?"

"That was the old fellow in the blue overalls and mud-boots."

"Pshaw! It can't be."

"But I tell you, it's so. I know the old rascal well. He came the same game over Snapper, at the store. Snapper snubbed him, and lost him. I hope you haven't cut him."

A deep groan from Bumpwell told of his sorrow. But he had more sorrow yet in store. He had the sorrow of seeing Sam. Smiler ascend to the lucrative post of the millionaire's attorney—a sorrow which was to rankle in his bosom while he should remember that the golden opportunity had once been his, and that he had foolishly thrown it away. C.

BAD LUCK.—We never knew an early rising, hard-working, prudent man, honest and careful of his earnings, who complained of bad luck. Good character, good habits and industry seem impregnable to the assaults of ill luck.

"A HERO OF THE LUMINOUS HEART."

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

Some men are good-natured in spots; some are good-natured when they have their own way, or have fallen upon some good luck; some are good-natured when at ease, but cross when burdened; some are good-natured in company, and cross at home—all smiles and geniality in the store, and among customers, but lowering and moping at home. Now and then we find a real son of light—a hero of the luminous heart!—*Henry Ward Beecher, in the New York Ledger.*

"A hero of the luminous heart,"
Whose smile can heal the wound and smart,
Is he whose face warms "like the summer,"
"A son of light" and love is he,
At home, abroad, on land or sea;
"Good-nature," toned with sympathy
And joy, wait on the welcome comer.

For palpitating in his words
Is music, sweet as songs of birds—
His voice sounds like a benediction.
Sadness and grief take sudden flight,
As though the sun had risen at night;
His presence is a cheerful light
In the dim vale of sore affliction.

Oh, life is worth the living, when
We have the joy of happy men,
Within whose hearts is writ the charter
Of pure good-nature and its grace:
It beams like sunshine on the face;
It is a glory of the race;
It quenches flames about the martyr;

It is a cordial to the faint;
It is a halo to the saint;
It lifts the load from shoulders laden;
It bears the wounded from the ground;
It dries the tear and heals the wound;
It softens woe wherever found,
In heart of matron, man, or maiden.

◆

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE INAUGURATION OF HOSTILITIES.

The sudden entrance of Neva Wynde into the midst of her exulting enemies struck them dumb. Craven Black sat with hands outstretched, as they had grasped the letter Neva had snatched from them, his face growing livid, and a look of consternation glaring from his eyes. Octavia Black stood, half-leaning still over her husband's shoulder, as if turned to stone, the mocking smile frozen on her lips, a look of terror and defiance on her face. Mrs. Artress, retaining more of self-possession than the others, stared at Neva with unmistakable hatred and triumph. The treacherous French woman drooped her gaze, and grew pale and awe-stricken.

Neva, still clutching the letter to her bosom, looked at her enemies one by one, her red-brown eyes blazing. It seemed to those who looked upon her that the red flames leaped from her eyes of gloom, and they trembled before her. Her pure, proud face was deathly white, but it was stern and awful in its wondrous beauty, as she turned it from one to another in an expression of scathing contempt that stung Craven and Octavia Black to the very soul.

Then, without a word, but with her letter still clutched against her panting breast, the young girl swept from the room with the air, the step, and the haughty carriage of an insulted empress.

The conspirators heard her slowly ascend the stairs to her own room. They stared at each other for a brief space in an utter and terrible silence. Mrs. Craven Black was the first to speak, and her companions started as her voice broke the dead and awful hush.

"Well, upon my word!" she ejaculated, forcing a strange, hoarse, and uneasy laugh, that jarred on the ears of her fellow conspirators.

"A queen of tragedy!" muttered Mrs. Artress, referring to Neva's appearance and departure from their presence.

Craven Black sighed and scowled darkly. An ugly smile disfigured his mouth.

"Well," he said, "matters have been brought to a crisis. I would have preferred to keep up the semblance of friendship a while longer, but the girl has torn the masks from our faces. She has declared war—so war let it be. In the fight before us, the strongest must conquer!"

"I could not dream she would follow me," said the French woman deprecatingly. "I am not to blame. I am sure, very sure, that she is going to run away. She will leave the Wilderness to-night."

The ugly smile deepened upon Craven Black's visage.

"We will see!" he said, and his voice was terrible in its significance and threatening.

The French woman had read Neva's purpose aright.

The young lady went up to her room and closed her door, and held in the flames of the bright wood fire the torn and crumpled letter she had written to her lover, and which she had rescued from the hands of Craven Black. She let the small burning remnant of paper fall upon the blazing log, and watched the blue shrivelled ash wave to and fro in the current of air, and then whirl upward into the capacious chimney.

The letter thus destroyed, Neva, with a white face and wild eyes, set about her few preparations for departure. Her soul was in a tumult; her brain seemed on fire. She could not think or reason yet; she only knew that she longed to get away—that she *must* get away. She put on her round hat above her braids, and was about to throw about her a light shawl, when a sudden fierce rattling of the casements in the wind warned her that a night in late September in the Scottish Highlands was likely to be cold. She opened one of her trunks and dragged out to the light a pretty sleeved jacket of the soft and delicate fur of the silver fox, and this she put on. She took up her muff and dressing bag and hurried into the ante-room, panting and breathless, eager for the outer air.

The door opening from the ante-room into the hall was closed. Neva pulled it open—and found herself face to face with Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, Mrs. Artress and the French woman!

The girl recoiled an instant before this human barricade as if she had received a blow. Then she waved her hand in a haughty, commanding gesture, and said:

"Let me pass! Stand aside!"

"Not so fast, Miss Wynde," said Craven Black mockingly. "This lady, my wife, is your personal guardian, and she has the authority to control your movements—"

The girl's passionate eyes flashed stormily at her enemies.

"Let me pass, I say!" she cried, in a low, suppressed voice. "Attempt to detain me here, and I will arouse the household!"

"Do so," said Craven Black tauntingly. "The two stolid women in the kitchen cannot hear you; and if they could, they have been prepared for your outcries, and will not heed them. The sailors are on the yacht, in the loch below. You are out of the world up in this eagle's eyrie, and you may beat your wings against the bars of your cage till you drop dead, my pretty bird, but no one will heed your flutterings. Call, if you will. Try the effect of a shriek!"

He took a step nearer to Neva, who retreated before him, shrinking from his touch. He went after her into the room, his companions following. Celeste closed the door, and placed herself against it.

"Sit down, Neva," said Octavia Black, with a mocking intonation. "Lay aside your hat and sacque. Don't abandon us upon the very evening of our arrival in our new residence."

Neva made no answer, but Octavia shrank before the stern accusing of the girl's gloomy, passionate eyes.

"As your guardian," said Mrs. Black, recovering her self-possession, which had been momentarily shaken, "I desire to ask you where you were about to go when we intercepted you?"

"I might refuse to answer, madam," replied Neva, "but you know as well as I do that I was about to start for Inverness on foot, and that I intended to go back to Hawkhurst and to my friends. Unfortunately, Mrs. Black, you are my personal guardian; but Sir John Freise and my other guardians are desirous that I should choose another in your stead, and I shall now do so. Your character, madam, is at last revealed to me in all its moral hideousness. My recent vague suspicions of you have become certainties. Mr. Atkins was right in his distrust of you. But, madam, because my dead father loved and trusted you to the last hour of his life, because you have borne his honored name, I will spare you from blame and obloquy, and screen your ill-doings and ill-treatment of me even from my guardians. I will agree to thus screen you if you will stand aside and let me go forth now, at this moment."

"But, Neva," said Mrs. Black, "you will lose your way on the mountains; you will make a misstep over some cliff, or into some ravine; or you will die of cold and exhaustion long before you can reach Inverness. It is twenty miles as the crow flies. It is forty, as you would have to travel. We will not send you in the yacht. Your scheme of departure is impracticable. In fact, you cannot go."

"You mean to detain me here a prisoner?"

"Call yourself by what name you will," said Craven Black, "you cannot go."

The young girl looked around her desperately, like a hunted deer. There was no pity or sympathy in those hard and greedy faces. Had she been penniless, she would have been as free as the birds of the air; but being rich, her enemies looked upon her as their rightful prey.

"Are you a pack of outlaws?" demanded Neva, her young voice ringing through the room. "How dare you thus interfere with the liberty of an English woman?"

"You are not an English woman, but only an English girl," interrupted Octavia Black. "You are a minor, without right to liberty or the exercise of your own will. You are my ward, Neva, and as your guardian I command your obedience. How can you reconcile it with your conscience to rebel against your step-mother?"

"You are not my step-mother," cried Neva hotly. "When you ceased to be my father's widow, you ceased to be my step-mother."

"I think the law takes another view of such a case," said Mrs. Black. "But, at any rate, I am still your guardian, and as such I have a right to read all the letters you write or receive. I read your letter to Lord Towyn, and exhibited it to my husband—"

"And to your husband's cousin, and to your maid!" said Neva. "I am aware of all that. As to your right to examine my letters, I do not believe in it. Your action in opening my letter to Lord Towyn," and Neva's cheeks flamed, "and in reading its contents aloud to your familiars, was an act of the grossest indelicacy, and want of honor and moral principle. Any person with a grain of decency in his composition will confirm what I say."

Mrs. Craven Black was stung to fury by this outspoken declaration, its truthfulness giving it keener effect. She compressed her lips, being unable to speak, and hurried to and fro with uneven tread like a caged tigress.

"We will not discuss the right or wrong of Mrs. Black's very natural and proper act," said Craven Black. "She had the right to read your letter, and therefore did read it. I think you have no further fault to find with us than this?"

"Such an indelicate letter for a young lady to write," murmured Mrs. Artress, turning her eyes upward. "'My own dear Arthur.' I never was so shocked!"

Neva turned her back upon the woman without a word, and replied to Craven Black as if she had not heard his cousin speak.

"I have other fault to find with you, Mr. Black," the young girl said haughtily. "You and your wife have been false and treacherous to me from the beginning. You planned to come to this place before you left Hawkhurst, and you sent Mrs. Artress on in advance to prepare this house for your reception. Yet you pretended to me that we were to go by rail into Yorkshire. You allowed me to convey that impression to my friends, while you intended the impression to be a false one. The manner in which you proceeded from the railway station to Gravesend, and in which you have come to this place, has been secret and furtive, as if you meant to throw off pursuit. You have shamefully deceived me, and I regard your conduct and that of your wife, now that my eyes have been opened, as base, mean, and treacherous."

"Regard it as you like," said Craven Black airily, although his face flushed. "My dear child, you are beating against your bars like the bird in the cage to which I likened you. Don't waste your strength in this manner. Be reasonable, and submit to the power of those who have right and strength upon their side."

Mrs. Black paused in her walk before Neva, and said vindictively, and even fiercely:

"That is what you will have to do, Neva—submit! We are stronger than you. I should think your conscience would reproach you for rebelling against me in this manner. Did not your father a score of times enjoin you in his letters to love and obey me? Did he not in his will enjoin you to cling to me, and be gentle and loving and obedient to my wishes? Is it thus you respect his wishes and memory—"

"Stop!" cried Neva imperiously. "How dare you urge my father's wishes upon me? How dare you speak of respect to his memory, which you outraged at the time of your recent and third marriage, when you summoned my father's tenantry to a ball, and made merry in my father's house, thus virtually rejoicing in his death? I cannot hear my father's name from your lips, madam."

"Oh, you can't!" sneered Octavia Black. "You will have to hear whatever I may choose to say of him; let me tell you that, Miss Neva. You may fling off my authority and your late father's together, if you choose, but his last letter to you should be held sacred by you, and its injunctions fulfilled to the letter, as sacred commands from the dead to the living."

"That last letter!" said Neva. "The letter written by Craven Black, with your assistance and connivance! Ah, you start. You see that I comprehend you at last—that I have fathomed your wickedness! That letter, now in the hands of Lord Towyn or Mr. Atkins, or Sir John Freise, emanated from Craven Black's brain and hand. It was a clever forgery, but, thank God, I know it to be a forgery! My father could never have so coolly and easily disposed of his daughter's future. He never wrote that letter!"

The girl spoke in a tone of such firm conviction, as if she knew whereof she affirmed, that the discomfited plotters made no attempt to deny her assertion. The Blacks looked at each other darkly, and read in each other's eyes incitement to continue in their wickedness with unabated courage. Mrs. Artress looked on, evilly exultant. She had never liked the heiress of Hawkhurst, with her dainty beauty, her piquant witchery of face and manner, and with all the wealth that seemed so boundless. Mrs. Artress was jealous, envious, and full of hatred of her, and her greed of money had been enlisted against the young girl.

There was a brief pause, during which Neva sat down, laying aside her muff and dressing bag. Presently she said:

"I understand you now, as you know. I trust that you understand me. I will not trouble you to deal more in subterfuges and deceptions. I comprehend that I have been decoyed here for a purpose, and that I am now your prisoner. What is your purpose against me?"

"We have no purpose against you, Neva," said Octavia Black quite calmly, and even pleasantly. "You deceive yourself. We saw you anxious to plunge into marriage with Lord Towyn, but disapproving the match, I have brought you here. I stand in the relation of a parent to you, and use a parent's authority, as I have a right. I have other designs for you. A worthy and accomplished young man, the son of my present husband, has solicited your hand in marriage, and I am anxious that you should enter the same family with myself. We will not coerce you; but I am sure, after a residence more or less prolonged at this Wilderness, you will be glad to marry Rufus Black and go back into society. You shall have sufficient time for consideration. I am ready to sacrifice myself and remain here all winter, if necessary to bring you to the desired view of the subject."

"One thing we may as well make plain," said Craven Black deliberately. "When you leave this house, Miss Wynde, it will be as the promised bride of my son."

Neva's eyes flashed mutiny.

"Is Rufus Black a party to this scheme?" she demanded.

"No," said Mr. Black promptly. "He knows nothing of my designs. I have told him to hope that you will relent, and he thinks that his step-mother has unbounded influence over you, which she will use in his behalf. Rufus is a poor, weak young fellow, with all his desirable qualities, and he would sooner cut his throat than force you into a marriage with him. No; Rufus is at Hawkhurst, where I have ordered him to remain until our return, or until he hears from me. He supposes us to be in Yorkshire. We are ready to start for your home with you any day when you shall have given us your oath that this visit to the Highlands shall be kept secret by you, and that you will marry Rufus on your return to Hawkhurst. These are our terms."

"I have said upon what terms I am willing to keep your villainy secret," said Neva haughtily. "My condition is that I am immediately allowed to go free. I shall not repeat that offer after to-night. I shall never agree to your terms. I shall never marry Rufus Black. I am betrothed to a noble and honorable gentleman, and I regard my promise to him as sacred as any oath. In short, Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, I will stay here until I die before I will yield to your dominion, or perjure myself by a cowardly oath."

"Very well," said Black. "It only remains to see which will hold out the longest, besiegers or besieged. Octavia, let us go. A night of reflection may bring our young lady to terms."

"I have a last word to say," exclaimed Neva, arising, her young face full of a bitter and passionate rebellion against her enemies. "You have not fairly counted the cost of your present undertaking, Mr. and Mrs. Black. The heiress of Hawkhurst, the only child of the late Sir Harold Wynde, the betrothed wife of one of the wealthiest young noblemen in Great Britain, cannot disappear in a manner so mysterious without exciting attention. I shall be sought after far and wide. My three guardians will set the officers of the law upon my track. Even now it is quite possible my friends may be on their way to this place. I shall be rescued from your hands, and you will be rewarded with the punishment and the ignominy you deserve."

"You believe all this?" cried Craven Black. "You think I am clumsy enough to permit myself to be tracked? How little you know me! I defy all the detectives in the world to trace me. I did not buy the yacht. A friend bought it in his own name, and provisioned it. The three sailors on board the yacht will never see a newspaper, will not stir out of the loch, and will see no one. I have attached them to me by a free use of money, and I have a hold upon them in knowing their past. If the officers of the law were to trace you to the loch below us, the men would not dare to reveal your whereabouts, for fear of being held as conspirators against your liberty. The two women-servants in this house never stir off the plateau. The cabman I hired to convey us from the London railway station to Gravesend, I discovered, in my conversation with him, was employed fort hat day alone, to take the place of the cabman who was ill. The fellow told me he was a navvy, bound for a voyage the next day, and he wished he could sail our yacht instead of going out to Australia in a steamer. You see how my tracks are covered? Your help must come from yourself, not from Lord Towyn. I have no more to say at present. If you choose to come to terms, you can send Celeste to my wife at any moment. Permit me to wish you a good-night."

He approached her as if to shake hands. Neva gathered up her effects and retreated into her room. The next instant a key was inserted in the lock, and the bolt was shot home. Neva was in truth a prisoner.

"Celeste, you will occupy this room," said Mrs. Black, to her maid, "and you must sleep with one eye open. Miss Wynde is desperate, and may attempt to pick the lock, or to escape by one of her windows."

"I am not afraid of pursuit," said Mr. Black meditatively, "but I would like to throw the pursuers upon a wrong scent. I wish I could get Lord Towyn over upon the Continent, with that sharp-eyed Atkins. How can we contrive to give them the impression that we are gone upon a Continental tour?"

They pondered the question for many minutes.

"I have it," said Celeste at last. "I have a sister who lives in Brussels, and who works in a milliner's shop in the Rue Montague de la Cour. You shall write a letter for Mademoiselle, Mr. Black, in her very handwriting, and date the letter Brussels, and I will send it under cover to my sister, to be posted at Brussels. Yes, my faith, we have it. One of the sailors shall post my letter, with its inclosure, from Inverness. It is well, is it not?"

The plan suited Mr. and Mrs. Black, who resolved to act upon it. The whole party adjourned to the drawing-room. Mrs. Craven Black brought forth several letters she had formerly received from Neva while at the Paris school, and which she had preserved for possible use. Mr. Black still retained the envelope to the letter Neva had addressed to her lover, and which he had intercepted. With these materials, and his skill at counterfeiting, Craven Black set to work to write a letter in Neva's name, and dated at Brussels. While he was thus engaged, Mrs. Black supplying him with suitable paper and ink, the French maid wrote to her sister at Brussels, requesting her to stamp and forward the inclosed missive. Octavia Black gave her attendant a Bank of England note to inclose in payment of the service.

The double letter was finished and sealed that night, and Craven Black went to Inverness the next day in the yacht and posted it.

This then was the letter which had been brought up to London to Lord Towyn by his steward, and which the young Earl, having read, had so instantly and vehemently pronounced a forgery.

But though it failed of its object, and did not deceive the keen-witted young lover as to its origin, it did not enlighten him as to Neva's whereabouts. He continued his search for her, calling in the aid of professional detectives, Mr. Atkins devoting his time also to the search, but they failed to find a clue to the missing young girl. And she, hidden in the far-off Scottish wilds, among mountain peaks and in a secluded rocky wilderness, looked in vain for her lover's coming. Her enemies were indeed more cunning than she had dreamed, and it seemed indeed as if the words of Craven Black would prove true, and the matter between the "besiegers and the besieged" would become a question of resistance. Which would be the first to yield to the loneliness and gloom of the Wilderness, and to the rigors of the swiftly approaching Highland winter?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MRS. BLIGHT ENTERS UPON HER MOURNING.

The sudden death of Mrs. Wroat proved a severe shock to poor Lally Bird, who had grown to love the eccentric, but kind-hearted old lady with a daughter's affection. She hurriedly dressed herself, and came down to Mrs. Wroat's chamber, pale and awe-struck, with a horrible sense of desolation and misery. It seemed as if a fatality attended her—that those whom she loved were in some way doomed. Her parents were dead, her young husband had been taken from her, and now her great-aunt had died, and she was again alone. She was not selfish in her grief, but she could not help thinking of her own bitter loneliness, as she bent over the still figure, and softly and reverently touched the straying locks of gray hair, and pressed her lips to the shrivelled mouth from which the angel smile seemed slowly fading.

Peters had by this time regained her self-command. There was much to do, and it devolved upon her to do it. Her tears must wait for a more convenient season. She was anxious that "all things should be done decently and in order," and that due respect should be given the dead mistress she had so loved. Her first act then, after arousing Lally and the servants, was to dispatch the footman to the family physician, and to Mr. Harris, Mrs. Wroat's lawyer.

The physician came first. He showed no surprise at the summons, and acknowledged to Peters that he had expected it before. He could only confirm the discovery of Peters that the old lady was dead.

The lawyer arrived while the doctor was in the house. Mrs. Wroat had requested that Mr. Harris should assume control of her affairs after her death, and he proceeded to seal her desk and to take charge of her private papers, while he gave directions for the management of the household while the dead should remain in the house. An undertaker was sent for, and all the grim preparations for the sepulture, so terrible to surviving friends, was entered upon.

The next morning's papers contained the obituary notice of Mrs. Maria Wroat, relict of the late John Wroat, banker, with a statement of her age and of the time appointed for the funeral.

The next afternoon brought to the door of the mansion in Mount street a cab, from which alighted Mr. and Mrs. Blight of Sandy Lands. They sounded the knocker pompously, ringing the bell at the same moment. The footman hastened to give them admittance.

"I see by the morning's papers that my dear aunt is dead, Toppen," said the Canterbury lawyer, who was known and detested by Mrs. Wroat's servants. "Why was I not informed of her dangerous illness?"

"Mrs. Wroat died sudden, sir," answered the man respectfully.

"Why was I not telegraphed to immediately upon her death?"

"I don't know, sir. Mr. Harris, he manages the funeral, sir."

"Show us up to our room, Toppen. You are perhaps aware that I am the old lady's heir? I am the nephew of her deceased husband, who left her a good share of his property. It all comes to me. I shall continue you in my service, Toppen, when I come up to town to live, which will be immediately. But, come. Show us our room."

Toppen hesitated.

"Beg parding, sir," he said, "but I'll just speak to Mrs. Peters. Miss Wroat, she can't be disturbed, and I don't know which room azackly Mrs. Peters intends for you."

"The amber room, of course," said Mrs. Blight superciliously. "We shall have the best room in the house, whatever Mrs. Peters or any one else may say."

"Miss Wroat has the amber room," said Toppen.

"Miss Wroat!" repeated the lawyer. "And who may Miss Wroat be?"

"She is Mrs. Wroat's young niece, sir, that she fetched home with her from Canterbury. The Missus said we were to call the young lady Miss Wroat. If you'll walk into the drawing-room, I'll go for Mrs. Peters."

The Blights went into the drawing-room as desired, and there awaited Mrs. Peters' appearance with outward bravado and some inward anxiety.

"You don't suppose the old woman can have made a will giving Lally Bird her fortune?" whispered the Canterbury lawyer's wife.

"No. I think she went off so suddenly at the last that she had no time to make a will. But if she did make one I stand as good a chance as any one of inheriting her money, even after all that has come and gone between her and us. She got her money from her husband, who was my uncle. The old woman had a stern sense of justice, and she would never have left her entire fortune away from her husband's nephew, who had, as one may say, a claim upon it. No doubt she left her great-niece a legacy, but you'll find that we come in for the best share of her money."

Mr. Blight did not reflect that Mrs. Wroat's "stern sense of justice" might cause her to leave her money away from him, instead of leaving it to him.

"No matter whether she leaves the girl fifty pounds a year or two hundred pounds a year," said Mrs. Blight venomously, "she goes out of this house on the day after the funeral, bag and baggage, the artful jade! I won't have her under my roof a night longer than I can help."

"Quite right, Laura. We should have had the whole pile only for her."

"I shall furnish the whole house new," said Mrs. Blight reflectively. "Aunt Wroat had abominable taste, and the colors here quite ruin my complexion. Why don't Peters or the housekeeper come? I shall discharge Peters—"

The last words were overheard by Peters herself, who came in in list slippers and a black gown, staid, angular, and sour-visaged as usual, with a warm heart nearly bursting with grief under her prim bodice. She courtesied to the self-invited guests, her lips tightly compressed, and an ominous gleam in her tear-blurred eyes.

"Ah, Peters at last!" said Mrs. Blight condescendingly. "We want to go up to our room, Peters, before we see the remains of our dear aunt. Why were we not sent for yesterday, Peters?"

"I suppose Mr. Harris forgot to telegraph to you," said Peters grimly. "He spoke of doing so. Your room is ready, and I'll send Buttons up to show you the way."

"Toppen calls Miss Bird Miss Wroat—ha, ha!" laughed the Canterbury lawyer. "A queer idea, isn't it, Peters? Does the girl call herself Miss Wroat?"

Peters bowed.

"It was my lady's wish," she said.

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Blight. "By the by, Peters, here's a sovereign for you. I always admired your sturdy independence, Peters. My aunt loved you, ah, like a sister, and leaned upon you, and all that, Peters. I hope she has remembered you at the last. It would be a pity if she had not left some trifle, to mark her appreciation of your fidelity and affection."

"I have no fault to find," said Peters coldly, rejecting the coin. "My dear lady remembered me generously in her will—"

"Her will?" interrupted Mr. Blight eagerly. "She did make a will then? I am glad to hear it. Had she died without a will, Miss Bird and Mrs. Wroat's other relatives would have divided the Wroat property and fattened upon it. As it is, I am sure Mrs. Wroat has done me justice. She would not have remembered any faults of ours in her dying hour, but would have seen to it that Mr. Wroat's nephew had his proper share in Mr. Wroat's property. I suppose you know the purport of the will?"

Peters bowed assent.

"I shouldn't mind a matter of five pounds," said Mr. Blight insinuatingly. "I should like to know if my poor aunt did justice to me in her last moments?"

"I don't want your money, Mr. Blight," said Peters, "but if you are anxious to know, I will tell you that Mrs. Wroat did you justice in her will. That is all that I will say. I am not at liberty to betray the contents of the will, which will be read immediately after the burial."

The countenances of the two fortune-hunters glowed with delight. They interpreted Mrs. Peters' words to suit themselves.

Mrs. Peters gave them no time for further questioning. She summoned the boot-boy, and ordered him to conduct the guests to their chamber, and then departed to the room where her dead mistress was lying. The boy led the way up stairs, Mr. and Mrs. Blight following, and ushered them into the red room, opposite Lally's apartment, and next in beauty and convenience to Lally's rooms.

"Peters goes out of this house when Miss Bird goes," cried Mrs. Blight, sinking into a chair and puffing heavily. "Charles, I believe I shall take the old lady's room for mine, and save coming up stairs. It will be so convenient. And you must run out a new dressing-room and bath-room; those down stairs don't suit me at all. Aunt Wroat's personal tastes were so horrid plain. I shall clean out all the present servants. I know that Toppen hates us both, but he was forced to be civil to the heir, you know. And, by the way, we must have mourning clothes, Charles. You must write to your tailor to send a man to take your measure immediately, and I will drop a note to Jay's, and have them send a complete mourning outfit and a dress-maker to me."

The notes were written in Mr. Blight's most grandiloquent style, and although they were brief, they betrayed the complacency of a satisfied heir in every line.

The tailor and dress-maker arrived in due time, and Mrs. Blight discussed ribbons and shades of silk, and the respective merits of French and English crape up stairs, while the old lady was being robed for the grave below, and Lally lay upon her own bed, weeping as though her heart were breaking.

Lally kept to her own room until after the funeral. She could not eat nor sleep. Etiquette forbade her attending her deceased relative to the grave, but she watched the departure of the funeral train from her window, her eyes almost blinded with her tears.

After the funeral, Mr. Blight and Mr. Harris the lawyer returned to the mansion in Mount street, and the latter summoned Mrs. Blight, Lally and Peters, to hear the will read.

Mrs. Blight swept in, clad in the deepest mourning, her garments covered deep with crape, a black-bordered handkerchief held at her eyes. Mr. Blight placed an armed chair for her near the hearth, the October day being chilly, and took a seat at her side with quite an air of proprietorship of the house.

Lally, in deep mourning, came next, with the faithful Peters, also in mourning habiliments. Mr. Harris placed a chair for Lally, and Peters sat near her young mistress, to whose service she intended to devote herself.

Mr. Harris then, with preparatory clearings of his throat, read the will. It commenced by declaring the testator of sound mind, being the usual formula, and proceeded with an enumeration of property at which the Blights grew inwardly radiant.

"All this, my real and personal property," read Mr. Harris, in effect, "I give and bequeath, absolutely and without reserve, to—my beloved great-niece, Lalla Bird, the daughter of John Bird and Clara Mulford Percy his wife, to her and to her heirs and assigns forever."

The Blights gasped for breath.

Lally's countenance did not change. She knew that her days of poverty were over; that she would never again wander shelterless and forlorn, glad to find shelter at night in a barn, and famished for food. All that distress for her was forever past. Her comfort and prosperity had been secured by the tenderness of her kindly and eccentric old relative, but Lally would willingly have gone back to her old-time poverty and toil, if by so doing she might have recalled her good friend from her grave.

"I say, this is simply infamous!" gasped Mr. Blight, turning upon Mr. Harris fiercely. "Infamous, sir! Do you know whose money, sir, this wretched old dotard has willed away so lightly? I'll tell you, sir. It was my late uncle's. It should be mine—and, by Heaven, it shall be mine. I'll appeal to the law. I'll contest the will."

"Are you a lawyer? Why do you talk so childishly?" demanded Mr. Harris. "The property of which Mrs. Wroat has disposed was hers absolutely, to dispose of as she pleased. If your late uncle had wished to provide for you, he would have done so. You are no relative of Mrs. Wroat, and you ought to know that if you contest the will, you won't get a penny. The girl would get it just the same—at least a portion of it—even if you succeeded in breaking the will, which you can't. Mrs. Wroat was indisputably in sound mind when she dictated that will. Under any circumstances, Mr. Blight, you can get nothing. With the exception of an annuity to be paid out of the income to Peters during her lifetime, the remainder of the property is absolutely Miss Bird's—or Miss Wroat's, as it was the wish of our deceased friend that the young lady should be called."

Mr. Blight sullenly recognized the truth of these words. He had been left out in the cold, and he was angry, disappointed, infuriated.

"Oh, my new and expensive mourning!" said Mrs. Blight spitefully. "I wouldn't have put on black for the old creature if I had known the truth. Peters ought to pay me the hundred pounds I have expended. I shall sell every black rag I've bought!"

Lally arose to retire, and Mr. Harris and Peters attended her from the room. Mr. Harris presently returned, and said gravely:

"Miss Wroat is fatigued, and Mrs. Peters thinks her unequal to the task of entertaining guests. At the request of Mrs. Peters, therefore, I have to suggest, sir and madam, that you take your leave without again seeing Miss Wroat. I will remain to do the honors of the house, in Miss Wroat's stead, at your departure."

Mr. and Mrs. Blight, thus quietly dismissed, retired to their room and packed their effects. An hour later their cab was announced, and they came down stairs, the lady leaning on her husband's arm and weeping with rage.

As they sat in the cab, the luggage piled on top, and slowly departed from the house where they had hoped to reign, Mrs. Blight looked back, sobbing in her anguish:

"And it might have been ours but for the artful minx I took in, as it were out of the streets. I'll never do a good action again in all my life—never. And now I must go back to poverty, and scrimp to save what I've spent in mourning, and we and our poor dear lambs may fetch up at the union, while that treacherous cat Lally Bird lolls in wealth. O dear! O dear!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

◆

A COMPREHENSIVE WORD.

One day last autumn old Smilax kept his boy out from school to assist in digging potatoes. The rust had struck the tubers, and Smilax feared that decay might set in if they were not speedily dug. When the boy next attended school his father sent by him a note explaining why he had been taken from his studies; and in this explanation a due statement of the potato disease was given. Mr. Syntax, the teacher, was a crusty, irate man, and upon beholding a full page of cramped caligraphy, where a very brief excuse might have sufficed, he was wroth; and he said to the boy,—

"Tell your father not to write such a mess as this again. If he has occasion to keep you away from school hereafter, a single word of explanation as to the cause of your absence will be sufficient."

A few days afterward old Smilax went at his second field of potatoes, and claimed the assistance of his son, as before. When the lad next appeared at school he bore to Mr. Syntax a note from his father containing this single comprehensive word, and nothing more:—

"KEPTATOMATATERING!"

S. C., JR.

◆

VERY TRUE.—Men may sophisticate as they please, but the man who does not endeavor to pay his debts is no better than the man who steals outright.

THE JAPANESE EMBASSY.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Yes, the world is surely moving with the music of Time's bell;
Daily through Creation victories of the Right resistless swell:

Victories of true Religion, victories of Science, Art:
For the Mind yet larger freedom, larger brotherhood for Heart.

Labor's meaning grows in glory: more true work redeems from ill;
So Humanity moves nearer to the Great First Worker still.

See the thrones of Bigots topple; crumbles Superstition's pile—
Pyramids no more symbolic of the Life along the Nile.

See, amid how many nations sink to death despotic rules;
On the wreck of brutal Serfdom Russia builds up Common Schools.

And behold, the Night is breaking of Old Asia's centuries:
On the New World's shores are walking the light-seeking Japanese.

Welcome to our arms, ye pilgrims! Welcome, for we surely know
That Humanity from communing will the stronger, better grow.

Europe, still in progress onward! Even, Africa, for thee,
In the brave steps of Explorers, we at last Redemption see!

Bell of Time, roll out thy music! Right 's alone the Diadem!
Brotherhood of all men, nations, and the Star of Bethl'em!

MAKING A BUSTLE.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

"There an't nothing like a coffee bag, Miss," said Delia Jane.

"I'm sure *I* don't know," said Miss Scrantum, in great perplexity. "If I am too straight up and down for the fashion, and *do* look as if I'd just come out of the Ark, as Elizabeth says I do, why, I suppose I *must* wear something of the sort. I know how it is in the city, and how fashionable city folks get to be; and I'm sure I don't want to disgrace my relations by looking too countrified."

"Law me, Miss! I'm sure Miss Lizzie didn't mean nothin' of the sort," said Delia Jane, who being lady's maid and seamstress to the younger Miss Scrantum of New York, was doing her best, according to orders, to make the elder Miss Scrantum, her aunt, from Pokeinthehole, Connecticut, present the outward appearance of other people of that date; "but you see, Miss Lizzie is very stylish, and bustles is all the thing now-a-days, even for old ladies—which I don't mean for a moment to say that you are one, Miss."

"Hem!" coughed Miss Scrantum, with a shrewd smile. "Well, Delia Jane, I don't object to a bustle, but where I am to get a coffee bag remains a mystery. Perhaps the grocer—"

"Oh, beg pardon, there's one in the house; that's how I came to think of it," said Delia Jane. "It's used for a piece bag, and it's in the trunk room. I can empty it in a moment. It's only half a one, you know, and all I've got to do is jest to take and draw up the string and tie it round your waist, over your own skirt, and then put on that black silk overskirt of Miss Lizzie's, and you're all right."

"Am I?" gasped Miss Scrantum. "O dear. Well, if it's *all right*, go on, Delia Jane; though *how* I'm to get about in all that, I don't know."

Delia Jane hurried away to the trunk room, and Miss Scrantum, the picture of despair, sat down to await her return.

She was a maiden lady of fifty, rather thin and rather angular, but not very ill-looking. She had not married simply because no one had offered whom she could accept. Perhaps if Eliphalet Spicer had proposed, in those old singing-school days, matters would have been different.

The bonnet with crown and cape might do for an elderly person like Aunt Scrantum, Niece Elizabeth had decided; but to walk Broadway and shop and visit picture galleries with any one whose skirt of black silk would have been a tight fit for the ironing board, was beyond her powers of endurance. Therefore the suggestion of Miss Lizzie's overskirt and a bustle, and the subsequent bright idea of a coffee bag.

Delia Jane was, like most of her class, rather apt to go to extremes in the fashion. Miss Lizzie would hardly have recommended that coffee bag, often worn by Delia Jane on full dress occasions; but having emptied it of its pieces, the thing was adjusted, and Miss Scrantum stood before the mirror to take a view of herself.

"It makes me look rather stout, don't it, Delia Jane?" she queried. "You don't think I look *too* stout, do you?"

"Why, that is the object, Miss," said Delia Jane. "No lady can stick out too much, now-a-days. You do look real stylish. 'Tisn't necessary for middle-aged ladies, but young ones hang their hands *so* when they walks out." And Delia Jane imitated the kangaroo.

"Do they hang their tongues out of their mouths and slobber, too?" asked Miss Scrantum.

"Not that I've heard of, Miss," said Delia Jane, in good faith.

"Because folks as far gone in their minds as to hang their hands so, generally do," said Miss Scrantum. And away she went, dragging the unwonted weight of wrappings after her, and apprising her niece Elizabeth of the fact that she "felt like an elephant."

"You've certainly got enough bustle at last," said Lizzie doubtfully. "However, I don't know that any one can go too far in bustles this season. What is it—newspaper?"

"A coffee bag," said Miss Scrantum. "I feel as if I was perfectly disgraced, and as if every one that met me would know of it."

"Goodness! no, indeed," said Lizzie. "Well, come on, Auntie."

And away they went—Aunt Scrantum, who was light of foot and strong of back in her usual light attire, finding every step a trial, because of the coffee bag and the puffed, ruffled and befringed overskirt, and kept in a state of continual terror, lest by some accident the strings of her bustle should become loosened, and that woeful coffee bag make an unexpected appearance in public. This led to her falling into the habit of giving a sly tug at her skirt, keeping at the same time a wary eye on any by-stander who might be led by her movements to suspect the coffee bag.

Just now, as we all know, the city is overflowing with cheap jewelry; diamonds, amethysts, pearls and rubies, as bright as the genuine and much larger, can be bought for a dollar a set.

One of the establishments where such things are sold happened to lie in the path which Miss Scrantum and her niece took on their homeward way, and before its window Miss Scrantum paused, transfixed.

"They can't be *real*," said the good lady; "but, massy, how they shine! Now Hepsy—that's our help—would be tickled to death to have a set for Sundays. I'll buy her one."

Miss Lizzie glanced at the store. It was not one of her shopping places.

"Would you mind if I ran over the way to get some gloves, while you shop *here*?" she asked.

"Law, no!" said Aunt Scrantum.

"It will save time. I'll wait until you come."

And Lizzie left her aunt to her fate and departed.

"Well, ma'am," said a pert young person, with a great deal of hair of several shades upon her head, and much white powder on her nose—"well, ma'am, what do *you* want?"

"Well, now, my dear, I don't exactly know," said the lady.

"Don't see how I'm to wait on you then," said the young person. "Hannah Smith, there's that same young feller smiling at me again that came past yesterday."

Aunt Scrantum finding herself, as she supposed, unobserved, gave a soft pull at the coffee bag, and ascertained that it was safe.

"My Hepsy has lived with me ten years," pursued the old lady blandly, notwithstanding her private opinion of the young person in powder, "and I'd like to take her home a present. I'll look at some of your false jewelry, if you please."

"An't got any," said the young person pertly.

"An't that window yours?" asked Aunt Scrantum.

"To be sure," said the young person. "Hannah Smith, there he is again. Gracious me!"

Aunt Scrantum felt for the coffee bag once more, and prepared to leave the store in righteous indignation, upon which the young person came to her senses, and reflecting on the opinion of her employer as to the neglect of customers, forgot the young man for a while, and condescended to remark:

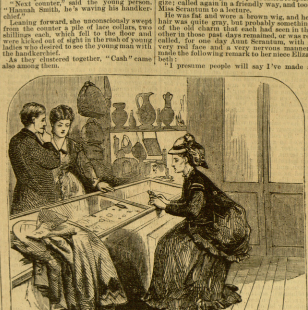
"Perhaps you mean the Kamschatka gems and Oregon gold sets?"

"Perhaps I do," said Aunt Scrantum.

"Next counter," said the young person. "Hannah Smith, he's waving his handkerchief."

Leaning forward, she unconsciously swept from the counter a pile of lace collars, two shillings each, which fell to the floor and were kicked out of sight in the rush of young ladies who desired to see the young man with the handkerchief.

As they clustered together, "Cash" came also among them.



"See that old woman?" he asked. "She keeps tucking something under her dress. She's awful puffy, too. Miss anything?"

"Oh, la!" cried the young person. "I thought she acted queer. Those collars are gone. Hannah Smith, did you put 'em away? If not, they're gone, and she's got 'em."

At the other end of the store, Miss Scrantum unconsciously made another dab at her dress, looked furtively about her, and became calm again. Meanwhile the young girl who presided over the caskets containing the Kamschatka jems and Oregon gold sets, spread forth a glorious mixture of emeralds and carbuncles as big as plums, and with a yawn informed Aunt Scrantum that "the first ladies in the city wore them."

Aunt Scrantum took out her purse, and having dabbed the coffee bag again, selected a resplendent "set" for Hepsy, and paid her dollar.

Meanwhile the young person had been prompt in her course of action. She had sent the cash boy for a policeman, and the next instant a great hand descended on poor Miss Scrantum's shoulder.

Miss Scrantum started to her feet. The policeman looked at her. Her settled respectability impressed itself on his experienced eye.

"It's all a mistake, ma'am, no doubt," he said. "Those girls haven't their senses about them; but they called me in, and I must do my duty."

"They called you in—what for? You look like a military man. I really don't understand."

"I'm a police-officer, ma'am," said the man.

"Beg pardon! I don't believe it. But they say you've hidden some collars under your dress. I suppose you'll have to allow yourself to be searched."

"I steal anything!" cried Miss Scrantum—"*I!* Yes, if you wish to insult me, young woman, search me!" Then suddenly remembering the coffee bag, she gave it an unconscious grab, and bursting into tears, sobbed, "No, you sha'n't! I won't be searched!"

"It's a case of this here kleptomania," said the policeman apart to the young person. "Take her into the back room. She an't a regular one. Be positive though. I think she's got 'em under her dress."

Miss Scrantum went into the next room, but she struggled with the young person, and beat her with her parasol when she attempted to search her.

The young person was determined, however, and at last had her way. When she came to the coffee bag, Miss Scrantum fainted.

"I can't find the things," said the young person, flopping out into the presence of the policeman; "but she had this bag on, and it's plain what she wore it for. It was under her overskirt."

A little while after this, Miss Scrantum, minus the bag, might have been seen, escorted by the officer, walking down the street. Strangers fancied that the lady had met with an accident, or had turned ill in the street. No one knew of the coffee bag snugly folded on the policeman's arm, or that the middle-aged lady, with gray finger puffs and black silk dress, was arrested for shop-lifting.

"Dear me! Where is Auntie?" asked Miss Lizzie, looking into the store a few minutes later, just as the young person was explaining matters to the newly returned proprietor. "Oh, can you tell me where the lady is who came in to buy some of those things for a servant?"—and she pointed with some scorn to the Kamschatka jems—"an elderly lady, with quite an old-fashioned bonnet. She said she'd come for me. O dear, how you do look at me! Has anything happened to her?"

"A relation of yours, Miss?" said the proprietor.

"Certainly—my aunt, from the country. How you frighten me! Where is she?"

"Here's them collars," said Cash, at that moment, diving under the counter. "They've only been knocked down. You did it yourself." And he pointed to the young person.

"I don't care. She had a bag on. Hannah Smith, hadn't she a bag on?" screamed the young person, in some alarm.

"Mr. Spicer, you'll find the bag at the station-house. And if *your* aunt—"

"Hold your tongue, Miss," said Mr. Spicer. "This is some dreadful mistake; but—but a bag—now, really, a bag, Miss! It's not usual for ladies to wear bags."

"*Coffee bags*," cried the young person. "There now."

Miss Lizzie Scrantum was a person of much presence of mind. She had some good sense, and a great deal of confidence. She immediately presented her card to Mr. Spicer.

"Papa is Job Scrantum. I think you've heard of him," she said; "and my aunt is his sister, Miss Scrantum. She certainly wore a coffee bag. You know what the styles are, and my maid thought a *tourneure* necessary; so poor aunty wore a bag. But you've found the goods, and you see that there has been a horrible mistake, and you will please call a cab and come with me to poor Auntie at once."

"Gracious Lord! if I must say so," cried Mr. Spicer, "'tisn't Miss Jerusha Scrantum! Why, I knew her well—as a girl—I— Hannah Smith, tell the cashier to pay Miss Brindle's wages for a week, and send her home. Cash, call a cab. Good Lord deliver us!"

So the cab came to the door. And Miss Scrantum, having just delivered herself over to despair, found herself clasped in her niece's arms, and shaken hands with by her old sweetheart, Eliphalet Spicer.

Being healthy, and not nervous, she suffered, besides her hour of mortification and alarm, only a slight nervous headache; but she never wore a bustle of any sort again—that one coffee bag was enough to last her a lifetime, as she often said herself.

The penitent Eliphalet Spicer called to apologize; called again in a friendly way, and took Miss Scrantum to a lecture.

He was fat and wore a brown wig, and her hair was quite gray, but probably something of the old charm that each had seen in the other in those past days remained, or was recalled, for one day Aunt Scrantum, with a very red face and a very nervous manner, made the following remark to her niece Elizabeth:

"I presume people will say I've made a goose of myself to marry at my time of life, but I've accepted Mr. Spicer." Then she paused a moment, looked at the carpet, rubbed her hands thoughtfully together, and added, "How oddly things come about! How little I thought, when I put on that horrible coffee-bag bustle, what would come of it!"

SCIENCE.

The difficulty which is always experienced, but usually soon forgotten, by children, in learning to appreciate the relative distance of objects from the eye—in other words, to acquire a correct idea of perspective—is well illustrated by A. Von Graefe, in a recent and learned article on sight and the visual organ. "What the child first knows of the moon," he says, "is that he cannot reach it with his hand; 'but,' as I once heard a child say, 'mother can reach it down.' Other inferences had helped him to this conclusion." By such gradual processes as these the child finally attains a true conception of the moon's place.

A writer in a late number of the *Edinburgh Review*, after an elaborate consideration of the more prominent and recent works relating to the primitive condition of man, comes to the conclusion that too little is known on the subject to admit of any satisfactory generalization as to the origin of the race. He argues, however, that there is no evidence to show that the barbarian of early times was more nearly related to the lower animals than is the man of the present day, and is disposed to look upon the lower savages as degenerate rather than undeveloped races.

On January 12th, 1820, a few scientific men met at the Freemasons' Tavern in London, "to take into consideration the propriety and expediency of establishing a society for the encouragement and promotion of astronomy." Sir John F. W. Herschel, and Mr. Charles Babbage, the inventor of the celebrated calculating machine, both of whom have died during the past year, were the last survivors of this little band. So says the report of the Royal Astronomical Society, the influential association which grew out of that apparently insignificant meeting.

The drainage of a district near the Lake of Bienne, in Switzerland, having lowered the level of that sheet of water about three feet, has led to the discovery of the remains of an ancient lake village, supposed to belong to the stone age, before the use of iron implements was known in Europe. Among the objects found is a hard-stone hatchet, larger than any other hitherto discovered in Switzerland. Human bones, as well as those of the horse, ox, stag, pig, goat, beaver, dog, and mouse, were found at the same time.

The curious theory of Mr. Herbert Spencer as to the origin of insects was described by Mr. A. R. Wallace, in his address at the anniversary meeting of the Entomological Society of London. "It is, that insects are not primarily single individuals, but that each one is a compound, representing as many individuals as there are true segments in the body." He also regards the Annulosa, or jointed animals—as the worms, etc.—as constituted in the same manner.

We learn from the *Chemical News* that there are two classes of chemists in England: those whose habit it is invariably to exaggerate values, in their analyses of commercial samples; and those who systematically act on the contrary principle, and depreciate. Professor C. A. Seely of this city distinguishes them by the terms high and low chemists, or the bulls and bears of his profession.

The red corpuscles of blood contain a certain quantity of oxygen; and M. Grehat has communicated to the French Academy a statement of the curious fact, that if blood be added to water containing living fishes, they can avail themselves, in respiration, not only of the oxygen in the water itself, but also of that contained by the corpuscles.

Russia is making extensive preparations for the most complete and careful observations of the transit of the planet Venus across the disc of the sun, in 1874. Professor Struve proposes to establish a chain of observers, at stations one hundred miles apart, stretching from the coast of Kamschatka to the shores of the Black Sea.

An authentic autograph record of the discovery of Australia by a Portuguese commander named Manuel Godinho, in 1601, at least three years before that country was visited by Dutch navigators, has been found in a library in Belgium. So says the President of the Geographical Society of Italy.

A large carnivorous animal, hitherto undescribed, is supposed to exist in Queensland, Australia, and was the subject of a recent communication to the Zoological Society by Mr. W. J. Scott, who sent a drawing of the creature's footprints.

Mr. W. Oswell Livingstone, the son of the great African explorer, is a botanist of fair attainments, and intends to make a collection of plants while engaged in the search for his father amid the wilds of South-eastern Africa.

Father Secchi, the great Italian astronomer, is not inclined to accept the theory of a connection between the phenomena of the aurora and the solar protuberances.

Two new species of birds have been discovered on the island of Ceylon. Of the 323 known species of Ceylonese birds, but thirty-six are peculiar to the island.

Professor Agassiz has been elected a foreign associate of the French Academy of Sciences, to fill the place of the late Sir Roderick I. Murchison.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ORPHAN GIRL writes: "Like every one else, I come to you for advice. I am an orphan, young, inexperienced, and alone in the world, as it were. 'Tis true, I have many warm and reliable friends, and am engaged to a good, noble man, who would gladly advise me, but I think a disinterested person is the one to seek in a case like this. About a year ago I became acquainted with a gentleman who paid me considerable attentions, visited me frequently, escorted me to parties and amusements of various kinds, etc. Suddenly he ceased his attentions, for some reason I knew not, nor did I care particularly. But for the past two months he has annoyed me exceedingly, in this manner: whenever he meets me on the street he will persist in walking with me, and he invariably manages to *meet* me, either by accident or otherwise. About a week ago I was on the street, saw him, bowed, and went on. In a few moments he was by my side, saying, 'Why did you not wait for me? you saw me coming.' I said, 'Mr. B——, I don't propose to wait on street corners for any gentleman, much less one who is not a friend of mine.' He looked astonished, and said, 'Upon my word, you are a remarkably plain-spoken young lady. How long since have you ceased to regard me as a friend of yours?' I told him that was a useless question, and declined to answer it. Then bidding him good-bye very pleasantly, went on my way rejoicing. The next time we met he would not speak to me. Now, do you think I did right or wrong? That gentleman, since he ceased coming to see me, has, comparatively speaking, snubbed me most unmercifully at parties and other places where we chanced to meet; only on the street would he notice me. I don't care anything about him, and am really glad that he is offended, for now I shall not be annoyed by his company on the street." We see nothing improper or injudicious in what you did.

A FRIEND OF MENTAL CULTURE says: "Will you have the kindness to answer the following questions in your next issue of the *Ledger*, as I am myself incompetent to decide them. Being president of a club, which meets next week, I should like to have the questions answered in your next paper. 1. Can a division be called for on a question, after the chair has declared the vote taken, the vote being all nays and no ayes? 2. Must a motion to insure a club room for $10,000, which is only worth about $300, be declared out of order by the chair, or is it right for the chair to put such a motion? 3. If there be appeals made on the above two questions, has the chair a right to declare the said appeals out of order, or have them stricken off from the minutes?" 1. By-laws frequently settle points like these. We cannot see why a division should be called for, when there is no dissentient. It is usually called for when there is doubt as to the Chairman's accuracy, or when it is desired to record the votes. 2. Technically a chairman's duty does not include the killing of such motions, if any one wishes to be on the record as a knave or a fool. He must not make himself the judge of the propriety of a motion, unless it is plainly contrary to a rule of the society. 3. A chairman had better, in such circumstances, throw himself on the meeting, and have his ruling sustained, as he would be sure to have, in the first instance, unless "mental culture" be in a very backward condition.

MOTHER says: "I have a little girl that has attended an Episcopal Sunday-school for about two years. At Easter I wished to have her christened, but the minister refused, on account of her name being so long. She has five names. He said he would christen her with three, and no more. Now I want to know if he has the right to refuse because she has a long name? Will you please tell me who is the Bishop of this State, and where he lives? Will you please answer this as soon as you can, and very much oblige." You do not mention your State, so that we cannot name the Bishop. It is, perhaps, as well. We wish to be peacemakers rather than to aid in a quarrel. So we propose that you call the service "baptism," and as the name is really no part of the rite, you can, perhaps, get some other minister to perform the service, and register the names. The good man probably thought it a pity to use up so many names on one child. To find five names each in a large family of girls would become embarrassing near the end.

N. G. K. says: "I come to you, as many others, for advice, and hope that it will not be denied me. I have been receiving attention from a young gentleman for some time. A short time ago the young gentleman confessed his love for me, and we became engaged—if it should be called an engagement when the consent of my parents had not been asked. I told him at the time that I did not care to have him speak to them of it, for fear that they would not give their consent. Since that time I have decided it would be best to have him speak to them. He has sent me a very handsome betrothal ring, but I do not wear it, as I do not know as I have done right in engaging myself to him; but I love him fondly, and think that I *always* shall. Pardon the length of this, and advise me as *you* would wish to be advised were you in my place, please." You had better tell him that you cannot wear the ring, as your parents are unacquainted with the relations between you, and allow him to ask their consent. The straight line is the shortest.

W. S. writes: "The sound advice you always give to those who submit questions to your decision induces another one of your constant readers, in trouble, to ask your assistance and settle a very perplexing question. I am twenty-nine years of age, and bear a moral character. I am a clerk in a warehouse, with a salary of six hundred dollars per annum. I am in love with a young lady twelve years my junior. I have a rival who resides at the same house that she lives in. I also have reason to believe that they are engaged. She always treats me cordially. Ought I, under these circumstances, to declare my love? Would it be honorable for me to still prosecute my suit, even were they engaged? Is marriage with a step-sister lawful? Would you advise me to marry on $600, or wait until my prospects are brighter?" You might ask the lady if she is engaged, and tell her at the same time the reason why you inquire. Marriage with a sister of a deceased wife is lawful in this country, but is disapproved in the religious creed of some people.

ZIERF says: "I am a boy fourteen years of age, and have been a constant reader of the *Ledger* for five or six years, and I would like to ask a few questions. I think I will have to work, and do you think it is worth my while to go to a phrenologist to get my bumps examined and see what I am capable of doing? Secondly, do reporters have a different kind of alphabet from ours; and if so, where can I get a copy of it? Thirdly, what is the origin of April Fool's day?" 1. We think not. You are fit for "anything in reason." 2. Yes. Apply to a bookseller for a work on short-hand. 3. The origin of April Fool's day is uncertain, some connecting it with traditions of the flood; some with the mockery of our Lord. The former is countenanced as against the latter, by the fact that Hindoos have their All-Fool's day, but at an earlier date.

ONDAWA (West Hoosick, N. Y.) writes: "Will you please inform me through your Notices to Correspondents if the peanut grows in the ground like a potato, or if it grows on the vine like the pea or bean? And if they grow on the vine, are they buried in the ground for the purpose of curing?" They grow in the ground. You ought to have heard enough about peanuts in New England, from an amusing circumstance which happened several years ago. A man named Leland was elected Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Soon after taking the chair in that august body, he put his hand in his pocket, pulled out some peanuts, and went to eating them! After that, he became known all over the Commonwealth and throughout the Eastern States as *Peanut W. Leland!*

V. A. F. (Columbia, S. C.) says: "I want your opinion. It is the old story. I am in love; have proposed, and was accepted. But here is the rub: I am a Catholic and the lady is a Methodist. Now, what are we to do? I do not propose to become a member of her church, nor does she desire to be a Catholic. We have agreed to ask your advice, having faith in your judgment." Advice as to what? The propriety of your marrying? You should have asked the advice before proposing. Now that you have proposed and been accepted, there is nothing for you but, as an honorable man, if the lady desires, to make good your promise, and practice mutual forbearance.

LEX (New York) says: "Will you be kind enough to inform me through the columns of your valuable paper whether a person summoned to attend as juryman can send a substitute? Does pressing business ever excuse a man from serving as a juror? What compensation does a juryman get for his six days' labor? By answering the above questions you will confer a great favor upon an old admirer of your paper." A substitute cannot be sent; the court is the proper judge of your reason for claiming exemption, and if you are not thought sufficiently ignorant by counsel to be retained, you may be released. The compensation varies with courts and cases.

C. D. E. asks: "If a lady that is engaged should hear from another person something degrading to the character of the gentleman she is engaged to, and if this other person should try everything in his or her power to degrade him, and try to make his intended bride hate him, how should the lady that is engaged act toward that person, when the person had made her promise not to tell his or her name, and after she had found out that all statements made were untrue? Should she treat him or her with contempt, or continue to treat him or her as a dear friend?" We can answer the question in three familiar words: "Cut the acquaintance."

BLANCH (Iowa) says: "I want to know your opinion about something which troubles me much. I have two lovers, and love them both, and I do not know which to marry. They have both proposed, and I have told them each to wait a month. They are of equal wealth and position. I am an orphan, and live with my aunt, and knowing you are always willing to give your advice, I have consulted you." If you love them both alike, you do not love either well enough to marry him. How can we choose, not knowing them, when you cannot, knowing them so well as you do? Perhaps at the end of a month your own mind will be more decided.

W. K. (Exeter) says: "In the answers to correspondents, will you inform me whether it is better for a man to remain without the portals of a church entirely, than to go within and to listen to half of the service and then to leave the church? This matter has provoked some discussion among your readers, and not coming to any conclusion, we determined to abide your decision. You will greatly oblige us by answering in your next issue." Of course the worshippers should not be disturbed. It is a part of a wise man's religion not to molest that of his neighbors. But, apart from this, we think "half a loaf is better than no bread."

NEWARK says: "Will you oblige several of your readers by answering the following questions: 1. Can a married woman lawfully engage in a business under her maiden name; that is, to buy and sell goods, sign checks and all other papers necessary in transacting a wholesale or retail business? If so, under what circumstances? 2. Can a married woman lawfully buy goods under her maiden name?" 1. We think not; but then the laws of New Jersey may be peculiar. 2. Oh, yes, provided she pays on the spot, she may give any name she pleases—say Miss Cash.

R. (Hillsboro, Ill.) writes: "I became acquainted with a young gentleman about six months ago, and since that time till within the past three weeks, have been on very intimate terms with him. In fact, he has entirely taken my time, to the exclusion of all other gentlemen. He was quite popular, however, with other young ladies, and was invited by one in particular to her house very frequently. He usually went when invited, but never paid her any attention until very lately, when he suddenly transferred his attentions to her entirely, as far as escorting her to every thing that is going on is concerned, leaving me to go as best I can. Now, while I always have company and do not care, as far as that is concerned, I do not understand his actions. He still visits me; once or twice a week calls and spends the evening, and assures me that he loves me, and that he only visits the other young lady when she asks him. Would you believe him? The young lady surely does not ask him to go out with her. I have too much pride to ask him why he goes with her, and would not hint that I wish him not to do as he pleases to save my life, but it makes me very unhappy; and besides, my friends think that I am doing wrong to permit him to come to the house any longer, when he is the constant escort of another girl. She invites him, and did when it was understood by every one that he was going with me, and left me out, and has her particular friends do the same. Now is that any excuse for his late conduct? Please don't think this all nonsense, but tell me what you think I ought to do." Tell the young man that if he loves you, as he says he does, he must adopt a different way of showing it, and that you will not consent to have two strings to your *beau*.

A CONSTANT READER writes: "I am nineteen years old. A little over two years ago I became engaged to a young man, five years my senior. Then I thought, as the phrase is, that there was no one like him. No matter what I would say, he was ready to accede to whatever I would ask, until last October, and then I found out my mistake. I found that he was both a drunkard and a liar, and that it was not me he wanted, but my money. He even said that if the old woman—that is, my mother—did not hurry up and get out of the way, he would leave me, for I was wearing out his patience. A little over a year ago my folks moved away, and while I was absent we corresponded with each other; but when I found out his true character, I took his letters, portraits and ring to him, and demanded mine in return. He said that he had burnt my letters, and as for my portrait he would send it to me; but that he has never done. I have no one to confide in but my mother, and she told me to seek you for advice, and this I have done. What I want to know is, how can I get my portrait? I know your good advice will lead me aright." He can do you no real harm by retaining your portrait. It is only an act of petty meanness on his part. But when he reads this answer in the *Ledger*, if he has one spark of honorable feeling, this may shame him into returning it.

J. T. B. (New York) says: "It is with great pleasure I peruse every week your answers to correspondents, through which I have received a great deal of valuable information, and I now for the first time take the liberty of requesting you to answer the following: 1st. What class of books would you advise me to read, as I desire to improve my mind, so as to be informed on general topics, in order to take part in conversation when in intelligent company? I have a regular 'public-school' education, and am at present engaged in business, and my only leisure time is in the evening. 2d. Please name some author. By giving this your early attention, you will confer a great favor on me." Read newspapers and magazines of a good class, and books of History, Travels, and Biography. We name Motley, Froude, Palfrey, Prescott, Livingstone, Humboldt, Palgrave, Lives of Chambers, Brougham, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Arnold, Robert Stephenson, and Richard Cobden.

ISOLA (Belvidere) writes: "I am a young girl, nineteen years old; have become acquainted with a young man who has shown me some attention—more than any other ever did—and whom I love dearly in spite of myself. Now my father does not seem to like him; still he does not object to his visiting me. And again, there is a person close by who says I am setting my cap for him. First, would you give him up, or let things take their own course? Second, would it be setting my cap for him when I do not dress or prink for him at all, but just treat him as I would a brother? Third, would it be improper to call to see him with a young man and his sister, now that he is sick and cannot get out?" We see no reason for not letting "things take their own course," as you express it. The talk about setting your cap is not worth minding. It would hardly be proper to call, unless the young man is dangerously ill.

IN TROUBLE (Baltimore) thus mixes up things: "I solicit your advice on a subject that is of great importance to me. I am a young girl, nineteen years of age, and have received the attentions of a young gentleman for nearly two years. He is four years my senior, but is a whole-souled man, and would make a good husband for any one. He has asked me to marry him, but I have not answered as yet. Now I do not love him, and as I am not a coquette I do not want to lead him on any further. It prevents other gentlemen from visiting me, because they think I prefer him to any one else. One more question: Do you think I am too young to marry?" Your "trouble" does not affect us much. You must tell the young man you do not love him, and dismiss him. Perhaps you should have shown him this before, and so saved his time and yours. You are rather young to marry.

DESERTER says: "Seven years ago I deserted my native country—Germany—to escape the army, for which I was drafted. Now, anxious of paying a visit to my parents, I fear that on my arrival at home I may be arrested as a deserter. Five years ago I declared my intention to become a citizen of the United States, and those are all the papers I possess. Do you think that with such papers I can claim protection of the United States' consul in Germany? How would you advise me to be prepared to escape any trouble in Germany?" There is no way in which you can escape trouble, if you voluntarily return within the jurisdiction of the government from whose army you deserted. Desertion is an offence against the law—one of the highest offences; and no man can escape the penalty of it unless he keeps beyond the reach of the law which he has violated.

R. A. S. (Concord, N. H.) writes: "I was born in Ireland, and my father lives there still. His sister married a rich man in England. He died, and left all his property to his wife. When she died she left it to my father; but he not hearing about it for a good while, it went to his cousin, a man of the same name, who told him it was all false. I have supposed that my cousin has been getting whatever was left to my father, from his altered circumstances. Now if you will be kind enough to let me know, in your Notices to Correspondents, whom to write to, to find out about the property, you will greatly oblige me." Apply to some good, honest, reliable lawyer. State all the facts to him, and get him to advise you what course to pursue.

TENOR SINGER (Albany) says: "Being a subscriber of the *Ledger* for upward of ten years, and never troubling you with answers to correspondents, I hope you will answer this. Being a tenor singer, but not having a sweet or loud voice, and as I am desirous of improving it, I wish you would enlighten me through the columns of your most valuable paper, as to the best means possible of becoming a good tenor singer, and oblige." Writing very nicely as you do, you must surely have been struck during these ten years with the fact that the *Ledger's* spelling differs from yours in several particulars. As to the singing, you had better employ the best music teacher you can find, and act on his instructions and advice.

P. B. is desirous to learn a trade, and wishes to know if that of a blacksmith would be a good one. It is a healthy, respectable, and, if well followed, a lucrative trade. A better understanding of the true principles of shoeing is increasing the dignity of the occupation. Within the past year great progress has been made in the knowledge of the horse's foot, and the crude and imperfect notions of even the most intelligent in former times are becoming reduced to a science, so that they can be practically applied. If you choose the trade of a blacksmith, make a study of the horse's foot, and learn, both from your own observation, and from every one who knows anything on the subject.

C. C. C. says: "Will you please answer a question about which there is a lively discussion in this place? I refer you to the 6th book, 547th line, of Milton's Paradise Lost, and wish to know the meaning of that line; whether it is that 'he warned them to aware themselves'—that is, to defend themselves; or that they were aware themselves. You will greatly oblige a subscriber by answering the above in the columns of the *Ledger*. We rely on your superior knowledge." We take the word to convey the idea, "he warned them to be on their guard, with a view to their own defence." It is an old and exceptional use of the word.

STONY POINT says: "I met a young lady about three months ago, and have spent much of my leisure time in her society since. I find she is the kind of lady for a wife. I have told her my love, and she says it is reciprocated. I wanted to put off getting married until I got a little more start; but she says she prefers getting married now, and to help make a living. I am twenty-three; she is nineteen." If your expenses of living would not be increased, you might as well be married. If they would, a short postponement would be advisable; for even a small capital, in starting, may be a great advantage through life.

AMERICUS (Philadelphia) says: "I am now sorely perplexed in regard to the meaning of the word Americus. I have seen it used very frequently as a signature to pieces written for papers, and have consulted Webster, but can find no such word." Americus is a bit of home-made Latin, or the Latin name of Amerigo Vespucci, sometimes thought to have been the discoverer of America. Not over-wise persons sometimes put it to their letters when they think *they* have discovered, or wish to discover something, we presume.

F. H. (Onondaga, Mich.) says: "I have recently commenced reading your excellent paper, and am troubling you for the first time. Will you please give me the pronunciation of Goethe and Schiller and Napoleon and Blucher? Also, will you please tell me who are or were the individuals above mentioned, excepting Napoleon?" Goethe (Guh-teh) and Schiller (Shil-ler) were German poets, and Blucher (Bloo-ker) a Prussian General, all of the last generation.

H. A. S. (Madison) says: "I should like very much for you to tell me how to stuff birds, to preserve as trophies of my success as an amateur sportsman." You would have to learn from some one skilled in the art. There are establishments in the vicinity of the *Ledger* office where the business is carried on, but it is said that they have so much to do, it is difficult for a pupil to get the requisite attention to acquire the art.

GOOD TEMPLAR says he has been introduced to a young lady, and wishes to know if it would be proper to write to her. Not without more preliminary acquaintance.

A. L. (Norwich, N. Y.) asks: "Is Gail Hamilton a man or a woman?" A woman, although she wrote like a man when she pitched into her Boston publishers.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*